

THE COMING FREE  
CATHOLICISM

W. G. PECK

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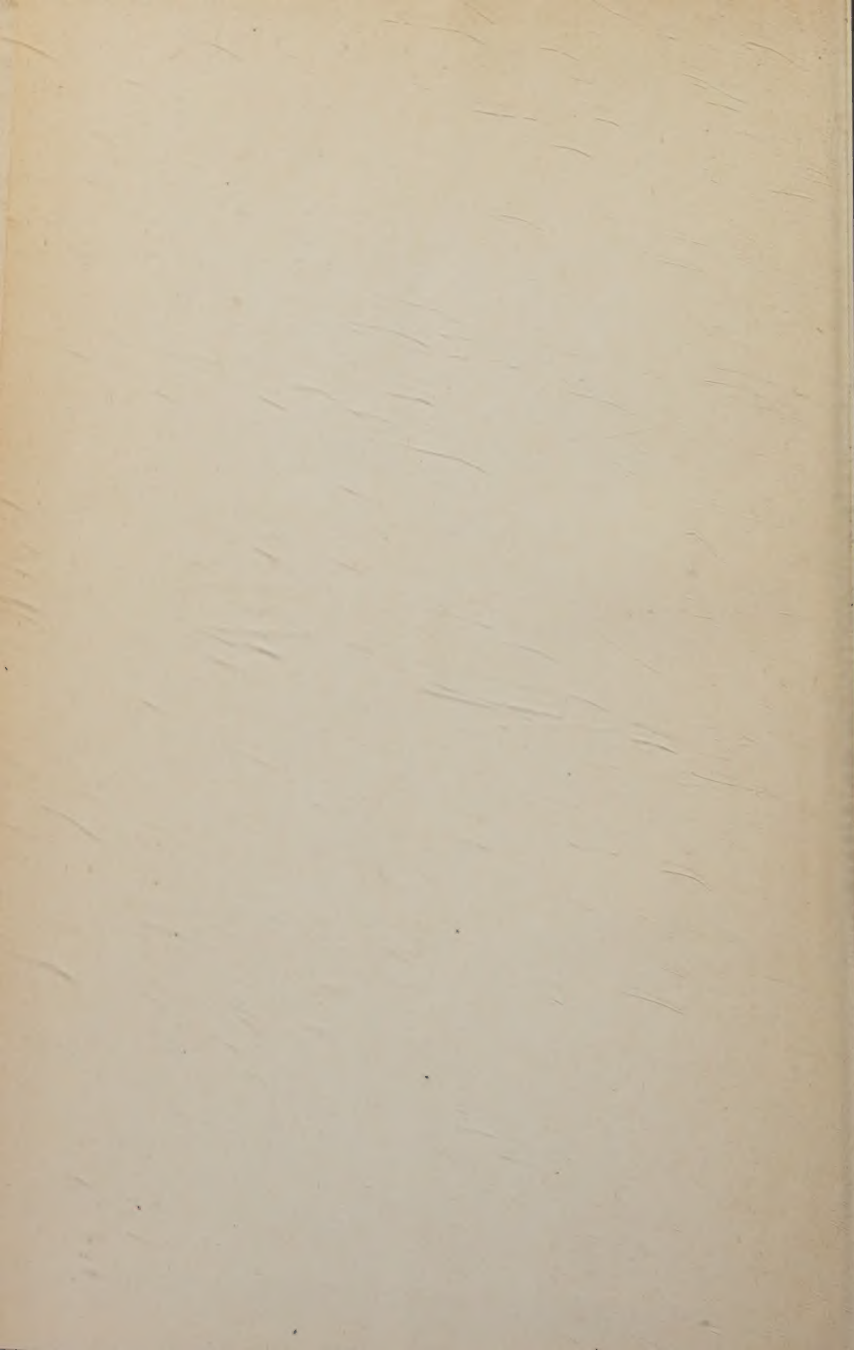
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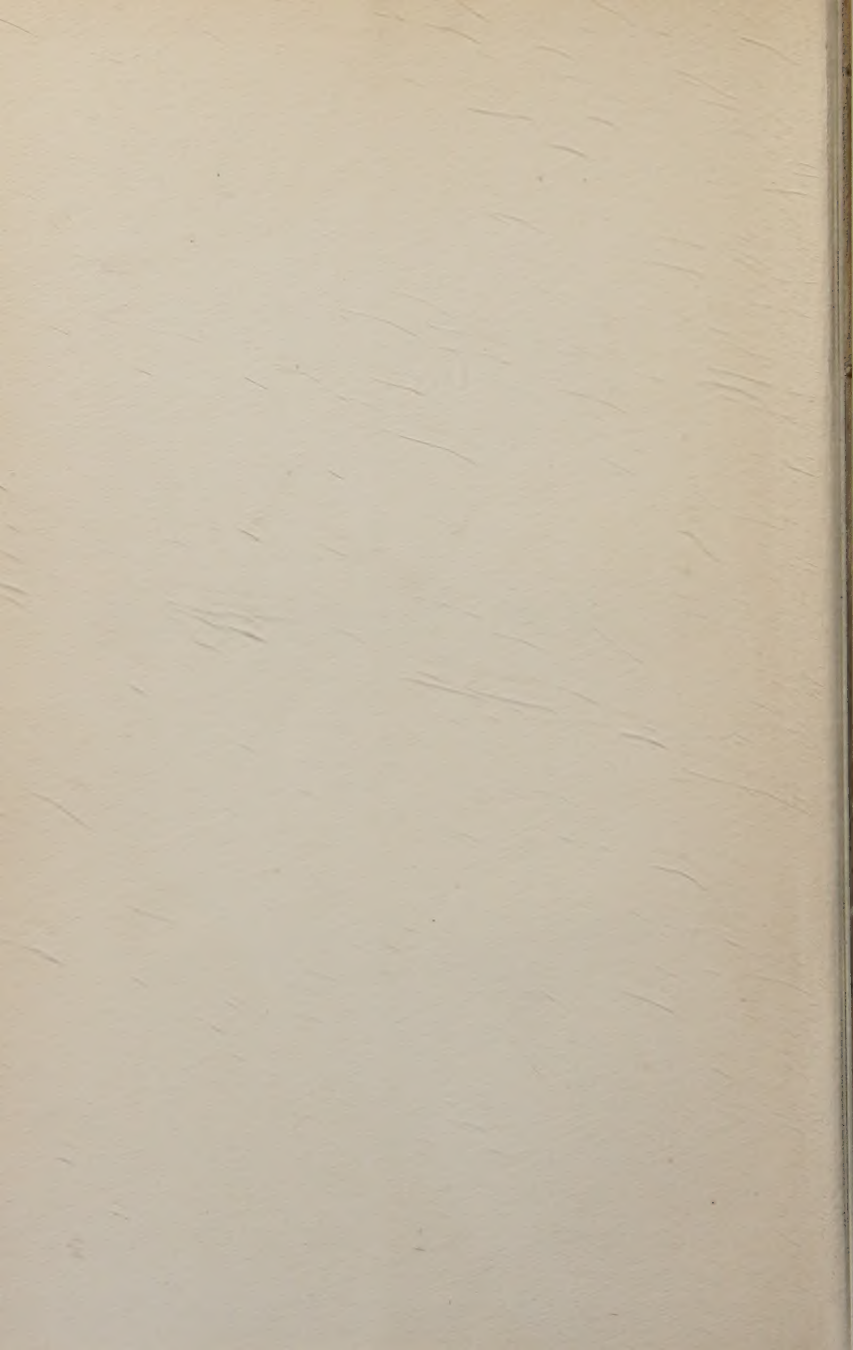
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THE COMING FREE CATHOLICISM



# THE COMING FREE CATHOLICISM

BY

THE REV. W. G. PECK



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TO  
MY WIFE

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## PREFACE

IT is often assumed by people who know nothing of the true developments of Christian thought, and little enough of the philosophical tendencies of our time, that every intelligent and honest clergyman or minister now spends his days and nights in convulsions and agonies of self-loathing, caused by the supposed fact that he is taking money for bolstering up a religion which he knows to be a tissue of myth, guesswork, obsolete ethics, and false psychology. Even Sir A. Conan Doyle and Mr. H. G. Wells appear to labour under this strange misconception ; and many who have no religions of their own invention to recommend to the world believe that the Church is occupying the stage only until she is superseded by an up-to-date revelation. What the new revelation will have to say about God, the soul, and society, of more revolutionary meaning than is contained in the Symbol of the Crucifix or the Sacrament of Holy Communion, it is difficult to imagine ; but Mrs. Besant, at any rate, assures us that it is coming. Let us await it without tremors. If the assertion that human respectability once nailed God to a cross does not unduly disturb the world's comfort and self-esteem, nothing else will.

Meanwhile, it may be well to assure those who suppose that thinking Christians are now in despair of their religion that they are mistaken. One does not wish to hurt the feelings of Mr. Wells, but the truth must be told. Upon this subject his outlook is mid-Victorian. He is as anti-

quoted as *Robert Elsmere*. Christian thought is the only solid thing remaining from the confused welter of negation, pessimism, scepticism, positivism, and international anarchy which has been the mental and moral environment of modern men ; and there are signs that Christian aspirations are beginning to move toward a positive reconstruction of society.

We Churchmen who are still young and who have experimented with the fascinating fireworks of "modern thought" know that they have failed to "go off." We have coquetted with religious liberalism and we have preached salvation by the Christ-myth. We have read the small pantheistic poets and we have walked sometime with Nietzsche. We have even heard of Mr. Bernard Shaw. We have been socialists and anarchists and many other things. But we now know that we never were thoroughly awake, we never were truly alive, we never knew a genuine thrill or had a really revolutionary idea, until that surprising day when we discovered that we were in search of the Holy Catholic Church. We now know whom we have believed and we are not ashamed.

The Holy Catholic Church is what men have been looking for ever since they lost her. From time to time, disappointed at not finding the thing whose very name they could not remember, they have begun to believe that they had lost themselves, and they called those occasions the periods of decadence. At other times they went hot-foot after things which they said must surely be the elusive treasure, only to find that they were old mistakes under new labels ; and they afterwards remarked upon the swift changes of fashion in the modern world. They did not understand that they were still in quest of the Holy Grail.

This little book is a humble attempt to discover Holy Church. Its purpose is to indicate a definite line of approach to some of the crucial problems which affect both secular society and the various sections and fragments of the Church of Christ. It is hoped that no word written here will offend Christian people or any man of goodwill. I do not wish to be regarded as an authoritative exponent of the views of the Society of Free Catholics, for there are others who speak with much greater authority and doubtless with much greater wisdom and knowledge. But these pages plainly derive their inspiration from Free Catholic sources, and I wish to acknowledge my debt of gratitude.

If the reader is curious to pursue the idea of Catholicity into an atmosphere of more scholarly definition than is offered here, he cannot do better than consult the Rev. T. A. Lacey's volume, *Catholicity* (Mowbrays, 1914). But Catholicity and Catholicism are not always exactly related terms; and it is perhaps necessary to point out that the words "Catholicism" and "Catholic" are commonly used in ambiguous fashion. I believe that throughout this essay the immediate context will make clear the connotation intended in each instance.

My thanks are due to the Editors of *The United Methodist*, *The United Methodist Magazine*, and *The Free Catholic* for permission to incorporate some portions of articles contributed to those periodicals, and to my brother for much helpful criticism.

W. G. P.



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# I

## THE SPIRITUAL SITUATION

O God of earth and altar,  
Bow down and hear our cry,  
Our earthly rulers falter,  
Our people drift and die;  
The walls of gold entomb us,  
The swords of scorn divide,  
Take not Thy thunder from us,  
But take away our pride.

From all that terror teaches,  
From lies of tongue and pen,  
From all the easy speeches  
That comfort cruel men,  
From sale and profanation  
Of honour and the sword,  
From sleep and from damnation,  
Deliver us, good Lord !

G. K. CHESTERTON.

SINCE that early dawn when men first joined in corybantic dance or solemnly ate together the sacred flesh, there has been perhaps no period when the public and organized expression of religion has been so neglected, so completely overlooked by the majority, as it is at the present time in the Western world. The appalling indifference to the claims of worship, the extraordinary assumption that a specific profession of religion is a somewhat curious sort of hobby without any practical meaning, and the vast public ignorance of Christian doctrine and tradition, are phenomena which can scarcely be paralleled in recorded history. There is a loose practice of describing this state of things as modern paganism ; and it has been left to Mr. G. K. Chesterton to point out,

in one of his numerous surprising truisms, that this is a most unmerited insult to the real pagans, seeing that while the average modern man has no particular religion at all, the pagan was a person who possessed half a dozen. It is not paganism which confronts the Church. It may perhaps be more accurately described as secularism or positivism, but it is not with most people a conscious and deliberate attitude. It is usually a spiritual lethargy, a sheer unwillingness to realize the unseen, which in other days had seemed so near, so vivid, so vitally significant. Father Benson, in his book *Lord of the World*, indulged in a forecast of persecution which a determined and purposeful secularism might at some future time inflict upon the Church. He showed us the faithful being dragged off to martyrdom. There seems, however, no immediate prospect of persecution, whatever the future may hold. The outlook would be far more encouraging if there were. The Archbishop of Canterbury in a tumbrel would be a signal of hope for mankind.

The present situation was not entirely unforeseen. Pusey felt it in the air, and Newman spent a great deal of time explaining to Popes and Cardinals what was about to happen in the world. He foretold the coming of Infidelity. It has come, but not as Charles Bradlaugh expected. It carries no banners and flourishes no trumpets. It has smitten with a palsy the souls of men while their minds and bodies are consumed with a fever. It promises no high day of honour and dignity in the earth. Infidelity as we know it is no longer positive and joyous and aggressive, and it is no longer adventurous. It has uttered its last blasphemy. It is becoming conscious of its own tameness. Savonarola made an uproar in Florence and got himself burnt. John Wesley certainly did provoke public interest. The Salvation Army in its early days was pelted with cabbage-stumps. But the world which believes nothing has lost the faculty of attention. We have seen it grow bored in the midst of the greatest catastrophe of human history. Voltaire and Tom Paine are dead; and although Mr. J. M. Robertson attacks the

Christian faith with some gusto, attempting to show that, because man has an intuitive craving for Christ, therefore Christ must be a mistake, there is no public furore. The Rationalist Press Association has a forlorn air, for you can make enthusiastic sceptics only in days of strong and general faith.

The supreme characteristic of modern Europe has been a purely negative one. It has been the lack of any clear notion of what it would be at. It has had no dogma. It left off persecuting the Church when it lost the power to understand the Church's meaning. It threw no more rotten eggs at the Salvation Army when it ceased to be interested in salvation. In one country alone has the Church been persecuted in recent times, and in that country the habit of precise thought had survived. It was a Frenchman who claimed, not many years ago, that by their action toward the Roman Church the French Government had extinguished in heaven the lights which men would never again kindle. It is true that the most palpable result of the French Government's action was a Roman Catholic revival in France, but the intention to destroy the Church was in some quarters quite clear. That, however, is probably an isolated case. Persecution has gone out of fashion. Men do not persecute what they have forgotten, and the great masses of men in all spheres of life have simply forgotten the Church, her doctrines, and her sacraments.

There are some gay souls who, when confronted with such a statement of the position, reply that, although the Church and the sacraments may be neglected, although definite religious belief may be difficult to discover in any modern crowd, there is nevertheless a great deal of genuine religion in the world. During the war it has been fashionable to point to the heroism, the self-sacrifice, and the unsuspected faith revealed by the soldiers as a proof that after all a people may fall away from public and organized religion without becoming less sincerely and fundamentally religious. If one were so ill-advised as to argue that the modern defection was a proof that man's

religious instinct was for ever dead, the "argument from the trenches" (as we may call it) would have point. But no believer in the Church possessing his five wits would ever argue that men had no further capacity for religion. The Church exists because man is naturally religious. She claims to bring a supernatural satisfaction to his natural need. If the daily apocalypse of Flanders could not recall men to the ultimate issues of life and death, what could? If men could not realize some spiritual significance in their actions with the trumps of ten thousand angels sounding in their ears, when would they? But if any one ventures to say that heroism, self-sacrifice, and silent faith have been the characteristics of our civilization during the great defection of the people from the Church, his powers of observation must be severely limited: and not only his powers of observation, but his knowledge of the world's wisest and least biased opinion.

The most scathing indictments of modern life come not from Plymouth Brethren nor from Popes of Rome, but from dramatists like Galsworthy, or from philosophers whose Christian belief is so diluted as to be almost undiscoverable. Few would mistake Rudolf Eucken for a disgruntled evangelical, but he has written words which are full of withering contempt for some aspects of our much-vaunted modernity:—

A certain faith in humanity is needed to supplement the deficiencies of man as we find him and enable us to see him in an exalted light. But is the impression left on us by the movements of our own day such as would justify this faith in humanity? Do we not see the great masses of our population possessed by a passion that sweeps all before it, a reckless spirit of aggressiveness, a disposition to lower all culture to the level of their interests and comprehension, to replace quality by quantity, making of life a rougher, ruder thing, repressing individual freedom, and evincing the while a defiant self-assertion? And on the side of the individual what do we see? Paltry meanness in abundance, embroidered selfishness, idle self-absorption, the craving to be conspicuous at all costs, shouldering aggressiveness, repulsive hypocrisy, lack of courage despite all boastful talk, a lukewarm attitude towards all spiritual tasks, but the busiest industry when personal advantage is concerned. All this is far too glaring to be

overlooked ; and if, notwithstanding, we talk carelessly of the greatness of humanity and the excellence of individuals, asserting that if only given a free field they will infallibly make life everywhere happy and great, we thereby manifest a remarkable faith in man, a faith which of all faiths is most open to criticism.<sup>1</sup>

We have mastered the means of living in this world as no previous age has done ; but we have forgotten the meaning of living, and consequently our politics, our public controversies, our social energies have become increasingly concerned in a mean and ignoble fashion with the one problem of the distribution of material wealth. The wealthiest, most materially resourceful and powerful age in all the annals of mankind has for its dominant note, heard even above the furies of international war, a perpetual wrangle between rich and poor. The result is that the whole tone of public life has been sensibly lowered within living memory.

It has been the complaint in recent years that working men could not be depended upon to honour their own pledges solemnly given. Labour leaders have not seldom despaired of the anarchy of their own followers. But when the chief ideals held up before men are those of material gain, one cannot greatly marvel that poor men should sometimes be unscrupulous in their attempts to realize the ideals. In view of the thick-skinned self-satisfaction of the rich, one can forgive much to the poor. The Socialists and Labour men are accused of concentrating attention upon materialistic objectives, and the replies of their leaders are sometimes far from convincing. It is no pleasant thing to know that large masses of the people of England customarily spend their Sunday evenings in theatres and halls listening to expositions of socialist economics and seriously regarding this as a lofty exercise. It means that their only haven of refuge, their only secret resource amidst the ugliness and hardship of their lot, is the dream of easier material circumstance, or, at the highest, a more equitable social arrangement. Many of them had grandfathers who spent their Sunday evenings in prayer-

<sup>1</sup> Eucken, *Meaning and Value of Life*, p. 57.

meetings. Whereas the grandfathers worshipped Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Word, the grandsons imagine they are paying Him a compliment by reckoning Him with Proudhon and St.-Simon as one of the early Socialists. Yet doubtless it is a healthier thing to listen to Mr. Philip Snowden or Mr. Ben Tillett than to sit at home listening to a music-hall dirge from a cheap gramophone, or reading reports of Divorce Court proceedings from an evil Sunday newspaper. These are the chief alternative occupations of the poor on the Lord's day.

During the war the common people of England have behaved magnificently. One can only say that their conduct has been a greater miracle than the England of our time deserved. For many years, however, their temper had probably not been beautiful. Their recreations had not been beautiful. Their clothes, their faces, their speech had not been beautiful. Their very language was dying down from the old music of the dialects to a hideous jargon. Witless doggerel set to stupid airs was all the poetry known by the descendants of the English who sang the ballads and told the fairy-tales. Any informed patriot surveying the grimy scuffle which for countless thousands of Englishmen in the early twentieth century was life, and standing amazed at the spectacle of what had come of the promise which broke out with Wat Tyler and "Piers Plowman," would not have known whether to weep more for the realities of the poor or for their ideals. Battered and betrayed for centuries, misjudged and disinherited as they have been, who can wonder that the poor should hear the gospel of a better time and fancy that it must be the whole gospel of God? Who can wonder that they should prefer a few extra half-crowns on earth to any crown of life in heaven? Who can affect surprise if working men should think more about a piano in the parlour than about a harp in the skies? Nevertheless, the person who can pretend that the alienation of the common people from the Church has made no disastrous difference to the people is without historic sense.

From time to time one comes across an individual

enthusiastic for the absurd theory that the people of England are the Lost Ten Tribes. So far as one can see, the only argument that can be drawn in support of this theory from English history is that the people of England are most certainly lost. They have lost their way. But a study of English history reveals the fact that though the English never possessed Palestine, they once or twice came very near to possessing England. There was a time when England was merry. It is unfortunately necessary to repeat this to a world which cannot easily believe in merriment. Merry England was nothing like Utopia, but it was healthy. When the "dark Satanic mills" arose, the people were already forgetting the secret of their merriment, and they were to prove that a people without religious faith has no conclusive answer to tyranny, ugliness, corruption, and slavery. Such philosophy of rebellion as the English people possessed during the nineteenth century they probably owed to John Wesley as much as to any single man. He did succeed in reminding the colliers and weavers that they were sons of God, and a son of God is always a difficult problem for capitalists and politicians: he has a divinely direct reply to all those who wish to make him a tool.

But even the fires of the Wesleyan revival were only a pale reflection of the Christendom that once had been in England, and it did not balk the rich of their series of sordid triumphs. They took their toll of the English soil, of the bodies of labouring men, of the brains of inventors and of the souls of artists. They vulgarized life. They degraded politics and they poisoned the public Press. They insulted the flag of Britain and used the holy cross of St. George as a shelter for their soulless greed. They destroyed the liberties of nations for the sake of gold, as their friends in the Dark Continent destroyed the bodies of men for the sake of rubber. Had frankincense and myrrh been equally marketable commodities, they would have paid equivalent prices for them. There is only one thing to be said in their favour. They were not, as a rule, sufficiently hypocritical to bring these

gifts to the cradle of Christ. This, however, was not due to any lingering reverence. It was due to loss of memory. Even when they misused the flag of England they did not remember that it was composed of three crosses, and if they had noticed the fact they would not have known what it meant.

The godlessness of the poor may be sad, but it can be pitied. The godlessness of the rich has been cold-blooded and cynical. Not even the spectacle of a world soaked in blood and tears could cure some of these people of their itching cupidity. When the English crowd had gone to Flanders to live in mud and to drink death like water, some there were who proceeded to trick and swindle the women and children who were left at home. The world has judged that as a picture of callous insensibility the story of those who, having crucified Christ, sat down and "watched Him there" is unsurpassed; but had some modern profiteers been present they would have improved the occasion by picking the pockets of Mary and John. These are they who are "the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." For a long time they have been largely in control of the destinies of mankind. Probably nowhere was this vast worldliness more blatant than in Germany, although it is mere hypocrisy to pretend that it was not present throughout Western civilization. In the days immediately before the war, thoughtful men and women were already deeply perturbed at its visible effects. Confusion in thought was leading to anarchy in practice. A succession of huge strikes, perpetual economic bickering, the corruption of the parliamentary party system, the hysterical exhibitions of the militant suffragists, the threat of civil strife in Ireland, were clear symptoms of deep-rooted disorder. But the world was swiftly to fall into the plunging chaos of the war and the lurid culmination of one of the strangest periods of human history.

The threatened collapse of the gigantic edifice of modern civilization in scientific warfare, political anarchy, and

economic exhaustion recalled the world, at least in some faint degree, to the existence of the Church. People who had never seen the interior of a place of worship for years, people who had been content to drift with the tide of worldliness so long as their world seemed cheerful and comfortable, suddenly began to accost clergymen in the streets and to ask them where God was and what the Churches had been doing to allow the human race to come to such a fearful pass. From various quarters came mutually conflicting accusations. Some said that the Church had failed to preach the Gospel. Others affirmed that she had been wasting men's time with a Gospel which was now finally proved ineffective and useless. The sins and failings of the Church are broadly obvious and well known; and it may be said that the people most conscious of them are within and not without the Church. Sectarianism, lack of devotional fervour, and above all the loss of faith in her own divinity, have weakened her far more than her supposed neglect of social justice. This has often been gravely misunderstood. The wealthy layman who gives large subscriptions out of the profits of sweated industry is not a completely obsolete figure, nor is his clerical sycophant; but the Churches have performed an enormous amount of social service without winning in return any corresponding allegiance from the crowd. The Free Churches, mostly advanced in democratic political doctrine, have suffered most from the prevailing religious indifference. The fact is that the historic causes of the social situation are closely interwoven with the historic roots of the spiritual situation, and the crowd and the Church were simultaneously paralysed. The social needs of this day find the Church more bewildered than indifferent. This subject will occupy us later. What we have now to insist upon is that the particular accusations levelled against the Church in connection with the war are misdirected.

The assertion that the godlessness, the greed, and the ensuing disasters of our times are final proof that the Church is a failure and ought now to be "scrapped,"

means either that the Church is a failure because she is the vehicle of exhausted and outworn ideals for which the world has no further use, or else that the Church, being in the position of power and influence, and being entrusted with the true gospel, has betrayed her trust, neglected her task, and has looked on unmoved while the human race has been heading for destruction. A century ago ardent reformers habitually made the latter assumption, that the Church, originally intended to create the millennium, had since made a pact with the forces of darkness. We shall see later in what measure this is true. But in our own times this criticism has gone out of fashion, and the Church has been blamed rather for clinging to dogmas and traditions which obviously must be withered and wormeaten because the modern world had ceased to believe them. To that type of mind which takes a special pride in being "modern," the Church is no more than a doomed and decaying survival from a day whose whole motive and mode of life have been for ever superseded. The proof that the Church is unnecessary is to be found in the glaring fact that the Church is deserted; for had the doctrines of Christianity been of permanent value they could not have been abandoned by man in the course of his progress. Mankind has outgrown religion, as Comte prophesied. At the best, black coats and Roman collars are interesting antiquities: at the worst, priests and churches are a drag upon the chariot wheels of life.

Now, it needs no great perspicacity to see that this very common and widespread view is the result of a mechanical conception of progress. From this way of thinking arises the argument that if in its indefeasible onward and upward movement mankind leaves some things behind, that in itself is conclusive proof that they were better left behind. If the human race was religious in the twelfth century, and in its more generally active branches not religious in the twentieth, the highest degree of probability attaches to the assertion that religion was necessary only during the earlier stages of human growth.

The influence of this clockwork conception of human

life has been enormous, subtle, and most pernicious. Hegel, the scientific evolutionists, and Karl Marx have between them hypnotized all sorts and conditions of men. The average newspaper reader at the beginning of the twentieth century accepted it as an axiom that the twentieth century would be generally an advance upon the nineteenth, just as the nineteenth was an advance upon the eighteenth. There were many who counted themselves Christian who would have thought it almost blasphemous to doubt that mankind had always steadily improved and always would do so. It is true that this view involved total blindness to some of the most conspicuous facts of history. It is never difficult to be blind to facts when one has a fixed idea ; but this was an illusion concerning the very nature of human existence. Young men quoted Tennyson, who had no doubts about an increasing purpose running through the ages and the thoughts of men growing wider with the process of the suns. If Tennyson is speaking merely of observed history, the proposition can be argued ; but if he is stating a fixed dogma, there is an end of all argument. Men are always better in March than in February, and there is no reason why we should not sit down and play dominoes until the happy moment when the whole creation shall reach the far-off divine event. Karl Marx wrote many pages to show that the social revolution would be brought to pass by laws as sure in their operation as the laws of physics. Why he should have hurried about Europe and suffered poverty and persecution in order to bring it to pass is a mystery.

The incidence of the war caused a great rending and shattering of what the modern world called faith, which was no more than the belief that the universe, including mankind, was an efficient machine. In the orgy of cruel barbarism and general confusion which has followed, it may be possible to obtain a hearing for a different doctrine of human progress. Lord Morley, in his *Notes on Politics and History*, turns his attention to the question whether the trend is always upward. His answer is in the negative. He recalls Gibbon's declaration that the human race was

happiest and most prosperous in the period between the death of Domitian and the accession of Commodus. He quotes Mommsen's words: "If an angel of the Lord were to strike the balance whether the domain ruled by Severus Antoninus was governed with the greater intelligence and the greater humanity then or now, whether civilization and general prosperity have advanced or retrograded, it is very doubtful whether the decision would favour the present." He reminds us that Mill expressed his doubt whether "all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being." Of course, there is another side to all this, but such opinions should give pause to the shallow optimism which regards progress as certain and continuous.

Of all sterile and dreary philosophies, that which posits a mechanical progress from age to age is the worst, for the spiritual significance of human activity can be preserved only if each age is free to go to the devil in its own way. Therefore, upon any free and heroic reading of life, it is always possible that man may throw away his compass, lose his way, and abandon the treasure which has been accumulated through generations of painful experience. The assumption that the Church is unnecessary to further human development because at present she is so generally neglected is an assumption which involves a very shallow view of human nature and human history. It involves, moreover, a false view of the nature of Christianity. At the back of the modern mind seems to lie the thought that nothing can be true and valuable which does not readily approve itself to men in their secular requirements—a judgment to which no respectable pragmatist would commit himself. Its existence in an age of commercialism and screaming advertisement is not surprising, but it is absurd to apply it to the great normative ideals which have been offered for our guidance, and it is particularly futile to apply it to Christianity.

When Christ came into this world He did nothing to destroy men's power of choice. He left them free, even though in their freedom they betrayed Him and spat

upon Him and crucified Him. He was tempted to take absolute control of human destiny, of all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. He was tempted to win influence with the crowd by some miraculous solution of economic problems. He was tempted to paralyse opposition by the performance of marvels which should overwhelm the contemporary imagination. To all these proposals He said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." His appeal must be to men in their unobstructed moral and spiritual freedom. He had not come as an emperor, or as a demi-god, or even as a popular hero. He had come cradled in a manger. He did not obtrude Himself upon the world. He came quietly, obscurely, humbly. He possessed no arts of self-advertisement. He made no unfair bids for popularity. He did not dazzle men's eyes or warp their judgments. He left them free to accept or reject Him as they would, and He has left all subsequent ages similarly free. He cannot be better discerned merely by a more instructed philosophy. We have as much chance of accepting or rejecting Him as the people of the first century, or as the men of the Middle Ages had; and there is no absolute guarantee that because one age has been an age of faith the next will not be an age of unbelief. The lengthening witness of the Holy Catholic Church provides an ever-increasing testimony; but there is no testimony which a man cannot reject if for special reasons he wishes to do so, or if his mind is fascinated by the glamour of things seen.

The war may possibly help to produce the conviction that modern civilization has departed from ideals which are essential to the fundamental health of society: from ideals which must be earnestly sought after and recovered if we are again to have public decency and private well-being upon earth. But its first result in the sphere of religion was to provoke an outcry against the Church for having so feebly and nervelessly controlled the affairs of men. This was, of course, a very different view of the Church's place in society from that which had prevailed in our generation. And it was a curiously false view.

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The Church had not controlled society, she had not led men in thought or action, for the simple reason that for much longer than had ever been supposed (at least by Protestants) society had been drifting away from the Church.

The origin of this drift will be discussed in another chapter; but as to the fact of an enormous and unprecedented defection from the Church and from the Christian faith there can be no honest doubt. Eucken looks upon it as perhaps the capital feature of the modern world. The ages of the faith's heroic achievements he regards as having imposed a great strain and tension upon men, from which life must of necessity seek relief; and he goes on to describe the effects of the slackening of the tension:—

With the slackening of the tension, however, Religion finds herself in a critical state. She can no longer make good her claim as the central authority in life; her appeal has lost its old direct, convincing force. The human and divine resume their antagonism; religious facts and experience lose their vividness; religion becomes more and more the mere embroidery of life abandoned to other interests.

Eucken considers that such a period of released tension began with modern times, and of the human position in this period he writes:—

Man acquires the proud consciousness of his own powers: the problems of the world's work crowd upon him, dazzle him, push far into the background all thought for the salvation of the soul. He can scarcely understand a frame of mind which could centre its thought and care on the spiritual life. So momentous a change must inevitably throw doubt on the religious solution of life's problem; and the advance of doubt means a corresponding ebb in the religious life, even where its outer forms subsist unchanged.<sup>1</sup>

The theory that religious faith necessarily imposes an unnatural and eventually intolerable strain builds upon very doubtful history and psychology. If religious life

<sup>1</sup> Eucken, *Meaning and Value of Life*, pp. 9, 10.

were always synonymous with the habits and temper of Puritans or Trappists, if Christianity by its sacramental principle did not sanction the activities of men in labour and in laughter, the theory of the strain of faith would need no demonstration. But the Christian faith has created more than hermits' cells and hair shirts. It has brought to birth gorgeous music and pictures bathed in golden light. It gave Europe nearly all its holidays. It mothered the revival of the drama. The ages of faith knew very little of that faddy and finicking squeamishness which has come into vogue with non-religious humanitarian culture. The world seems to have been in exceptionally boisterous spirits when it believed in the spiritual world. Dante was no typical man of his time, and the old story about the people of Florence watching him with awe as he walked in the streets reveals at least that they thought Dante not a little out of the common. Chaucer's world is human and joyous and coarse.

It is, however, even more surprising to be told that the present age is one in which life has sunk down from a period of overstrain. Spiritual fervour has departed, but not strain and stress, and our spiritual slumbers have been crowded with nightmare. Behold this restful modern world, lulled into dreamy contentment by the dulcet strains of Ibsen, Zola, and Nietzsche! Human nature, released from strain, indulges in a pause for refreshment in which worry, anxiety, nervous collapse, lunacy, and suicide have increased beyond all previous experience. From an age of faith and its unnatural tension we come to an age of unfaith in which two great groups of the human race mobilize all their resources in frantic efforts to blow each other out of the world. This is a strange mode of relaxation. It may be objected that whereas the strain imposed by faith is unnatural, the stress incident to thoroughgoing worldliness is healthy and productive of finer adaptation to environment; but if the naturalness or unnaturalness of a way of life may be judged by its practical effects, the ages of faith will endure comparison with the ages of unfaith.

Although Eucken's explanation of the fading-out of religion from life may be false, his facts are not to be doubted. The Church has been sinking into a position of provincial obscurity: has been left stranded by the main currents of human affairs. Mr. Gooch declares that no presentation of history can be adequate which neglects the growth of the religious consciousness, and Lord Morley, reflecting upon this, recalls how often the "immense phenomena of Churches" have contributed "the gravest chapters in the history of States." For many centuries the destinies of the Church and the destinies of civilized man were visibly interwoven. The Church was situated upon the highway, and all passers-by had, as a matter of course, to reckon with her. Men argued and fought about her as they argued and fought about their bread or their freedom. In no respect is the modern defection more clearly and more alarmingly visible than in this, that the Church no longer occupies this central position in life. In our time she appears upon the stage of history only when she is being disestablished, or when Parliaments are passing laws which assume that the clergy are primarily servants of the State.

The Churches undoubtedly present "immense phenomena" in history, but not in current history. We have witnessed the spectacle of all the Great Powers of Europe tearing at each other's vitals, and the Church has had no voice in the dispute, has inspired no moral convulsion, has checked no outrage: not because Christian people have not felt the burden of the world's sorrow and shame, but rather because the Church has lost the consciousness of her own identity, and has forgotten that the keys of the kingdom were entrusted to her. Had this divorce between the world's executive powers and the Church been effected as a definite and deliberate policy upon her part, and with the object of gaining a more profound and unquestionably spiritual influence upon human affairs, the people under the Church's guidance might speedily have delivered themselves from the bloody whirlpool. But this divorce

had not come to pass by the will of the Church. It was the result of the drift of human life as a whole. In England, the claim of the national Church to represent the nation had long been precarious, for the Free Churches, in their days of power, had claimed a large share of the English people's allegiance. But the Free Churches had been falling of late years into a condition not unlike decay. At the time of the war's outbreak they were without adequate leadership, without any clear consciousness of their own meaning; and they had long since ceased to exercise any real power in the national councils. Individual Free Churchmen rose to high office in the State, but the Free Churches grew gradually weaker. They were naturally the first to feel the effects of the widespread indifference, for they had not the prestige, the social resources, of the Church of England. Nevertheless, the national Church was seriously affected, and only the influences of the Oxford Movement had saved her from earlier catastrophe. Shortly before the outbreak of war, her Easter communicants numbered about two and a half millions--no clear indication that her sacraments had any strong hold upon the soul of the English race. Complaints were frequently uttered concerning the numbers and the quality of the candidates for ordination. The place of the Church of England in the estimation of great masses of Englishmen may be judged when it is remembered that the average trade-unionist probably regarded an Anglican Archbishop much as he regarded Black Rod: as a meaningless decoration surviving from the Middle Ages. Cardinal Newman was accustomed to find fault with the Roman Catholic administration for placing English Catholicism under the control of "Propaganda," thus treating England as a mission field. Twenty years after the Cardinal's death there were excellent reasons for all Churches regarding England as a mission field.

In the year 1902-3 the *Daily News* conducted a census of religious worship in London. Making a very generous allowance for those who could not possibly attend any religious service, the result arrived at was that two-thirds

of the population were absent through indifference or disbelief. Probably the proportion should be reckoned as three-fourths. The result of this census was considered sad and depressing; but, unfortunately, since that time there has been no improvement. The evidence shows that things have gone from bad to worse. The indifference of the great cities has appeared in the small towns, while in London it has assumed portentous proportions. Shortly before the war the *Daily News* proposed to take another religious census of the Metropolis, but, for reasons which may be guessed, the proposal was dropped. Had it been carried through, it cannot be doubted that it would have revealed deplorable results. There are huge and forlorn areas in London where Churches have ceased to touch any but a few individuals. There are great Nonconformist chapels attended by dozens, which in other days rang with the voices of hundreds. There are buildings which once echoed with the living sounds of praise and prayer, now standing empty and deserted or converted to the uses of commerce or entertainment. The High Churchmen and the Roman Catholics still manage to exert attraction in some of these districts, but with these exceptions tens of thousands of Londoners in these deserts of brick know and care no more about the Church of Christ than about the mysteries of Eleusis. And what is true of London is only less true of the nation.

What will be the issue of this state of things no man can safely prophesy, but to imagine that the Christian sanctions will maintain themselves amongst a population severed from the Christian tradition is foolishness. When it became manifest in the nineteenth century that the modern intellect had lost its hold upon the Christian Faith, many seemed to imagine that the mere rejection of Christian dogma and tradition and the forsaking of worship would make no difference to the practice of Christian morality; and for a time men who ridiculed the Christian Faith revered the Christian ethic. It was not then understood that this reverence was mainly due to the surviving and unconscious influence of the rejected

authority ; but this has since become apparent. For as that influence has worn off, we have seen that the Christian ethic itself has been disputed and dismissed. Ties and sanctions hitherto regarded as sacred beyond question have been roundly assailed. We are threatened with a public sexual standard which would have made our grandmothers and even our grandfathers blush. What kind of society, what manner of public ethos or private habit, may emerge from this welter cannot yet be foretold ; but serious students of life are telling us that nothing new will emerge, and that nihilism and collapse are certain unless the Christian Faith can once again be erected in a central position as the core around which the teeming and tumultuous modern world may cohere and by which it may be saved from the centrifugal dispersion of its energies.

A few years ago there was a widespread belief that the ideal of social service could replace the abandoned religious faith as a positive and constructive basis of human loyalty. The belief is already stale and old-fashioned. Social reform as a religion is not a success. As an enterprise of Christian men it may have a great future, but as a substitute for Catholic Christianity it is a ludicrous failure. To serve the welfare of some hypothetical future generation, which in the end will be swallowed up in the depths of the infinite unknowable, is no adequate motive for men. It does not provide any ground for judging of life's value, and for anything it can tell us it might be better to finish the human story to-morrow—or never to have begun it.

Amidst the moral and spiritual chaos of our time, however, there are certain curious phenomena which must be noticed. The defection from the Church undoubtedly had for one of its immediate causes the findings of the scientific and historical criticism of the latter half of the nineteenth century ; but in addition to this there were the philosophical and the practical secularism which founded their objection to religion upon other grounds, and used, or misused, science and criticism only as weapons

and tools. These forces are now showing signs of exhaustion. There is as yet no effect upon the practical situation. There is no visible return of the multitudes to the Church. It is probable that many things must happen before this takes place. Beneath the surface, however, there certainly is an awakening sense of spiritual need, and this can be judged by the growth of superstitions and the importation of foreign cults which we have witnessed of late. Indeed, most articles of the Catholic Faith find acceptance in one quarter or another, provided only that they are disguised under a new label. The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting and the communion of saints return as spiritualism. The miracles of healing and all the traditions of the holy wells come back with the Christian Scientists. God the Father is received as the latest discovery of Oriental poets. Mr. H. G. Wells has announced a new religion with God the Son as the sole object of faith. And God the Holy Ghost is now the Life Force. It would be easy to mock at these fugitive and confused shadows of the Faith; but in spite of much intellectual pride and sheer wrong-headedness accompanying their profession they do bear witness to the yearning of men, and taken together they cry aloud that the full Gospel of the Church is the one satisfaction craved by the human mind and heart.

In other words, the world has left the Church only to find that the promised land looks, upon closer inspection, more like a waste, howling wilderness. The world is being forced to rediscover the truth that man does not live by bread alone. Of all animals, man seems most adapted for life in this world; and yet upon the natural plane he never succeeds in finding rest. In order to make the visible world tolerable, he has to seek the invisible. In order to endure the known he has to thrust his hands beyond the stars and plead with the heart of the unknown. The agnostics who gaily informed their audience that God was unknowable did not expect that the audience would thereupon commence to exhibit signs of moral and mental collapse; but how else is the result to be described?

In the closing passage of his *Recollections*—memories which cover the concluding scenes of a long and strange spiritual drama—Lord Morley indulges in a significant meditation :—

A painful interrogatory, I must confess, emerges. Have not your school—the Darwins Spencers, Renans, and the rest—held the civilized world, both old and new alike, European and transatlantic, in the hollow of their hands for two long generations past? Is it quite clear that their influence has been so much more potent than the Gospel of the various Churches? *Circumspice*.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Morley defers the answer to this question, but there is danger in delay. The present situation clamours for a final judgment concerning the place of Christ and His Church in the world. It is a moment in which the Church must essay a new grasp upon human life as a whole or suffer a continuous decline in influence and significance. The alternative before the Church is world-power or downfall; but the world must be the whole world of human relations, while the power must be of no sort that politicians or diplomats or financiers can thwart. There is Empire in the very genius of Christianity. The Church is always Catholic in this sense, even in those sects and denominations which despise the word and glory in the weak and negative word "Protestant"; for most of them have gone forth to the uttermost parts of the earth, with some gleam of the empire of Christ before their eyes. The Church could never deliberately agree to live in the world and refrain from attempting to turn it upside down. Perhaps, remembering her miraculous history, we may believe that the very pressure and menace of the present day will stir her to some marvellous awakening and that we who love her may yet behold the salvation of God in the land of the living.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Morley, *Recollections*, vol. ii. p. 366.

## II

### THE HISTORIC TRAGEDY

In the waste howling wilderness  
The Church is wandering still,  
Because we would not onward press  
When close to Sion's hill.

Back to the world we faithless turn'd,  
And far along the wild,  
With labour lost and sorrow earn'd,  
Our steps have been beguil'd

*The Christian Year.*

THE causes of the present tragic position of the Church in the world are to be looked for in the very roots of modern history. It becomes increasingly apparent that the Western world has been moving for generations upon a false line, and that what is called the modern movement was gravely misdirected at the outset. The stupendous event which is known as the Reformation is being subjected in many minds to a process of critical revaluation—and probably the final verdict will cause grief to pugnacious Protestants without bringing much comfort to Roman Catholics. It is customary for journalists to deride the admiration for the Middle Ages which has newly arisen in some quarters, but that revived respect for mediævalism is nevertheless significant. If it really witnesses, not so much to an absolute acceptance of mediæval standards as to a conviction that with the collapse of mediævalism the world lost its way, there is much to justify it. However loose and unhistorical it sometimes may be, it may serve the very valuable purpose of shaking the smug self-complacency of many worshippers of the modern world.

Most of us in England have been born and bred in the belief that the Protestant Reformation was the greatest spiritual blessing bestowed upon mankind since Pentecost. We have learned that it was the foundation of modern progress, the charter of all freedom, and the restoration of pure and primitive Christianity to a world which lay benighted in a wilderness of superstition. Rome has been for us the frowning fortress of hypocrisy, and the word "Catholicism" has connoted legions of spiritual evils. Rome has appeared as the friend of all reaction, the enemy of our truest welfare. She has been the Harlot, Babylon, Antichrist, the incarnation of spiritual wickedness in high places. Her priesthood and sacraments have been blasphemy, and the popular Protestant judgment has regarded Roman Catholics as hardly to be counted Christians. Martin Luther was an angel of light and his antagonists were monsters of darkness. Catholicism, in short, was a sink of perennial iniquity and a perversion of the true Faith. The practical proof was to be seen in the facts that the Protestant peoples were characterized by their independence, love of progress—and cleanliness; while the Catholic peoples were known to be backward, lazy—and unwashed. Protestantism was spiritual religion. Catholicism was enslavement to superstition and idolatry. Protestantism was symbolized by the radiant figure of the Virgin Queen. Catholicism was represented by poor Bloody Mary. Doubtless the popular Roman account has been equally malicious and absurd, but we are approaching the question from the Protestant side, and it is well to deal with our own misconceptions.

No matter how greatly a reformation was needed at the close of the fifteenth century, there was one sad fact which spoiled all subsequent life. That reformation never happened. The Protestant theory is that in the sixteenth century the Church was subjected to a severe but salutary surgical operation which cut away certain mortifying limbs whose decay threatened the life of the Body of Christ. But somehow the mortifying limbs lived on, and at the present day they seem to possess

as much vitality as the rest of the Body. Moreover, assuming that the Church was decaying, it was no limb that was cut off: the Body of Christ was sawn asunder, if indeed it was not the Body itself which was amputated. For it was not the reformed Churches which preserved the sense of centrality and continuity. They have never lost a certain clumsy and uneasy air, probably due to their self-conscious provincialism and to their position as innovators. The Roman Church has marvellously retained its unity and has managed to keep alive in its members a tenacious faith in the Church. The Protestant sects became a ludicrous mob and the Protestant Faith fell into bewildering confusion. This, however, must not be taken as indiscriminate praise of the Roman Church. That Church, by its failure to limit the absolutism of the Curia, was undoubtedly largely responsible for the tragedy of the sixteenth century; and while the actual measures taken by the supporters of Luther provided no permanent remedy for the deep-seated disorder which existed, it must not be forgotten that Rome herself had made any other measures impossible at the time. The great need is for men of goodwill in all communions to realize the true nature of the situation out of which came the Protestant revolt, the fissure of Christendom, and many of the innumerable spiritual, intellectual, and social evils which afflict the modern world.

At the close of the Middle Ages it was clear to the whole Western world that a reformation of the Church was a paramount necessity. That conviction grew in Catholic soil. It derived its vigour from the Catholic Faith. It was maintained in a passionate devotion to the Catholic Church. The scepticism, the immorality, the long-fingered simony, and the blatant worldliness which flourished under the protection of the Holy See had become an enormous scandal of which all men were aware and which constituted the prime element in the public situation of Europe. It was admitted by great officials of the Church. It was recognized even by the Popes themselves. As early as the year 1311 Pope Clement V had

requested the advice of William Durandus concerning the holding of the Council of Vienne. The famous reply was given that the Church needed to be reformed "in head and members," and that phrase became for generations a watchword on the lips of the devout. Even Popes whose private lives were extremely flagitious and whose papal administration was a blot upon the human record could sometimes see the cogency of the dictum. Alexander VI, whose appearance as the Vicar of Christ is an appalling mockery, in one of his better moments appointed a committee of Cardinals to prepare a scheme for the reformation of the Church's morals. This was in 1497. Fifteen years later Pope Julius II addressed the fifth Lateran Council and declared that ecclesiastical reform was to be reckoned amongst the Council's chief objects. The Spanish delegates had come with instructions to insist on the reform of the Curia upon the ground that "the chief objection of the infidels to Christianity arose from the public and execrable wickedness of Rome for which the Pope was accountable." Julius, probably as a precautionary measure, set up a committee of Cardinals for this purpose before the Spaniards had any opportunity of stating their case. He also proclaimed a reduction in the various fees and exactions by which the Curia had been bleeding Europe for years past. He died in the following year, and his successor, Leo X, inherited the task of dealing with the Council. A memorial addressed to him by Gianfrancesco Pico alleged that "the worship of God was neglected and the churches were held by pimps and catamites," and went on to declare that the nunneries were dens of prostitution; justice was a matter of hatred or favour; piety was lost in superstition; the priesthood was bought and sold; the revenues of the Church ministered only to the vilest excesses, and the people were repelled from religion by the example of their pastors. The Council finally approved a decree of Leo which might have done some good had not the squabbles between the various officials who were to be reformed rendered it useless.

Here, however, is evidence not only that the Church contained within herself the consciousness of the need for radical reform, but that there was some degree of positive reforming purpose which in more favourable circumstances might have abolished the abuses and disorders of the time without splitting Christendom in twain. If during the fifteenth century a large part of the Church was sunk in sloth and sin, we must not imagine that the Church was wholly apostate and abandoned. The truth is that there was an immense agitation amongst sincere Catholics against the current evils and a widespread desire, not for any subversive revision of doctrine, not for any denial of priesthood and sacraments as they were established in Catholicism, but for an emphatic assertion of true Catholic faith and morals against the worldliness then so prevalent amongst the Church's officials.

Savonarola at the close of the fifteenth century arose like a figure of doom to prophesy that "the Church will be scourged and renewed, and that in our day," and with that message he became for a while practically the dictator of Florence. Fifty years before Savonarola was put to death, Nicholas of Cusa, a Cardinal of the Church, was executing his legatine commission to carry out the reform of discipline. Still earlier the Council of Constance (1414-18) had sought to accomplish reforms which the Curia only evaded. Again in 1423-4, the Council which met at Pavia and Siena attempted the task without material result. Eventually at Basel, in 1431, the better part of the Church was seen in active opposition to the absolute power of the papacy. The triumph of the Pope was of evil omen for Christendom. Throughout the century there appeared mendicant preachers who roundly assailed the corruption of the Church and called for the reformation "in head and members." These men often succeeded in stirring popular indignation to fury, and as the new art of printing gave them an ever-increasing audience, the demand for the rehabilitation of Christ in the government of His Church constantly grew in volume and intensity. What was demanded was not the sub-

version of Catholicism but its assertion. There was comparatively little of doctrinal heresy. Wycliffe may have been a forerunner of the Protestant revolt, but he broke with the papacy mainly because of the crimes of Urban VI. He did not abandon the doctrine of transubstantiation until 1381, when he was growing old and was within three years of his death; and while Lollardism died out in England, it seems to have retained little influence upon the Continent. Individual heretics there were; but during the fifteenth century, in spite of all the influence of the Renaissance, there was no general trend of theological opinion towards anything like Lutheran doctrine. Such defection from Catholic dogma as there was, generally expressed itself in a fundamental scepticism which was not entirely absent from the high places of the Church.

Those earnest souls who desired the reformation of the Church were not looking for searching theological revision or for ecclesiastical disruption. They waited for Holy Church to renew her holiness and still to remain the spiritual home of the Western world; and that their efforts were so persistent and so popular is good argument that the Church was not entirely unsound, and that she might conceivably have reformed herself. When it is remembered that in the century immediately preceding the Protestant revolt the Church had mothered such souls as Thomas à Kempis, Fra Angelico, Savonarola, Bishop Fisher, Sir Thomas More, and Michelangelo, it becomes difficult to believe that her spiritual resources were entirely exhausted or that Catholicism was nothing but a slough of iniquity.

Nor can it be fairly alleged that the Church was at that period the persistent foe of enlightenment and intellectual culture. Archbishop Berthold of Mainz said that the clergy hailed printing as a divine art. They thronged the book markets and endured privations in order to buy books. They wrote and circulated in great numbers books explaining religion. The Latin Bible was the first book printed by Gutenberg. The period

was one of great mental activity in Germany, but the Church certainly sanctioned and encouraged it. Schools and Universities were founded in the German lands, and men of advanced knowledge lectured openly upon the physical sciences. John Müller of Vienna and Nürnberg became Bishop of Ratisbon, and it was he who made the maps and calendars by the aid of which Columbus steered his way to the New World. "On the whole," says Dr. William Barry, "it appears that the German Universities flourished rather in the years which immediately preceded the Reformation than in those which followed it: and if we except Wittenberg and Erfurt, they almost all took sides with the ancient religion and the Holy See."<sup>1</sup> The English Reformation certainly had no great immediate effect in the direction of encouraging learning and culture. Cambridge in 1545 was apprehensive of the total decay of learning, and at Oxford no degrees were taken in the years 1547 and 1550.

As a matter of fact, there was in Rome itself, at the close of the fifteenth century, a great measure of freedom in discussion, and it was rarely that the powers of the Church were aroused against doctrinal heresy. The genesis of the Inquisition will be mentioned later, but at this time the spirit of the Inquisition was not rampant at Rome. The light of the Renaissance was not extinguished by the Church; nor was it specially intensified by the Reformation. The Reformation at its outset strove to unite to itself the contemporary Humanism, but it was never entirely successful, as the two great figures of Erasmus and Sir Thomas More bear witness. Erasmus, indeed, charged Luther with working harm to the cause of letters. As we shall see, the disruption of the Church left both Rome and Protestantism weakened and bewildered in face of the unforeseen developments of Renaissance and Humanism which later centuries were to reveal.

It is evident, therefore, that the Protestant Reformation was not primarily effected by any great European disloyalty to Catholic doctrine or by any widespread

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. i. p. 638.

feeling that Catholicism was essentially opposed to intellectual culture and inquiry. From time to time dogma was challenged, and the Church came into conflict with men of philosophy and science ; but such occasions were not sufficiently numerous or crucial to provoke the gigantic storm which swept away the old order throughout the half of Christendom.

Nor can it fairly be charged against the Church that her attitude toward the circulation of the Bible was proof of religious obscurantism. We know that at the Council of Oxford in 1408 the keeping of unauthorized English versions was prohibited ; but it is equally certain that some good Catholics kept English versions in manuscript. Sir Thomas More, in controversy with Tyndale, affirmed that before the Lollards translations were not forbidden. " I myself," he says, " have seen and can show you Bibles fair and old, written in English, which have been known and seen by the bishops of the diocese and left in the hands of lay men and women whom he knew to be good and Catholic people." Cranmer and Foxe both knew of pre-Wycliffite translations of the whole Bible. Tyndale's version was burned ; but it should not be forgotten that the reformed Church of England in 1537 found that version " offensive." The circulation of the printed Bible synchronized with the growing enmity towards Rome, which took its rise from sources entirely unrelated to questions of faith—and the new versions sometimes contained highly controversial notes. But apart from this, the belief that the Bible, suddenly thrust into the hands of an uneducated man, to be read only in the light of his own understanding, is an unmixed blessing is difficult to sustain. It has taken Protestants nearly four centuries to understand the Bible and to appreciate its precise quality as the veritable Word of God ; and the process of that learning has been fraught with bitter sectarian strife and personal suffering. The Church can hardly be accused of mere malignant obscurantism if she viewed with no very friendly eye the indiscriminate circulation of the Bible amongst the masses of the

population. To believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God does not necessarily imply that one shall believe also that the untutored mind of any individual can be safely left to draw its own conclusions therefrom; and even the great Protestant Churches have not allowed to the individuals of their own communions the unfettered liberty of expounding Scripture according to their own private notions.

If in later times, however, Rome has been extremely conservative in her attitude toward the established results of Biblical scholarship, we are not to conclude that this would have been the attitude of a Catholicism which had never been confronted with the spectacle of the Reformation. The Protestant revolt not only altered the course of religious life in Northern Europe: it reacted upon the Church of Rome. Her subsequent hardness and narrowness and her fits of downright cruelty need never have characterized a Church untroubled by huge defections and powerful antagonism. Modern Romanism has grown up in opposition to the Protestant communions, with disastrous results.

The point of all the foregoing discussion is that in the pre-Reformation period Catholicism was not viewed by enlightened men as the stronghold of mental darkness. The popular modern Protestant view of Holy Church was then unknown. The Catholic reformers of the fifteenth century desired that the Faith should be delivered from the clutches of the unscrupulous power which misinterpreted it to the world and constituted the most colossal scandal in history. The Protestant Reformation did not take the whole piety and learning of the Church with it. They were not all reactionaries and time-servers who opposed Martin Luther. There were many who felt that they were faced by a dilemma which never should have been created, and some chose the Roman horn of that dilemma, not because they loved the Roman Curia, but because they sincerely believed allegiance to the administration of the Holy See was a lesser evil than violent disruption. Their attitude to Luther or to King

Henry VIII was precisely their attitude to the extreme pretensions of the Popes. It was expressed towards the Popes at the Council of Basel. It was expressed towards disruption when Sir Thomas More, refusing to swear to the Act of Succession, which involved acceptance of the royal supremacy over the Church, held that the Act was not binding "because it was made without the common consent of Christendom."

The Catholic Church was wrecked, not because the world had grown weary of the Catholic Faith, but by causes into which we must now look. In order to understand them, it is necessary to grasp the important fact that for centuries prior to the Lutheran period the relation of Church and State in Europe was such as nowhere exists to-day. So great an authority as Maitland believed that the relation was conceived as that of two separate bodies whose real distinctness was not affected by the fact that they were composed of the same human units. Maitland's view is probably not the true one. A "churchman" in these days is usually one who belongs to the Church and not to a dissenting denomination; or his churchmanship is contrasted with the attitude of masses of men outside the Church. In the Middle Ages, however, a "churchman" was a cleric, and the only people with whom he could be contrasted were the laity. But the laity were all members of the Church, precisely as they were all members of the State. The recorded quarrels between Church and State were the quarrels of officials—not the rivalry of two separate bodies. The official hierarchy of the Church and the executive officials of the State were the two arms of that one body which was Christendom.<sup>1</sup>

The controversy which was fought out during the Middle Ages concerned the question of the priority of the officials of the Church or the officials of the State in the body of Christian men. Charlemagne, who did so much to promote the prestige and authority of the Church, managed to retain the predominance of power for the

<sup>1</sup> See Figgis, *Churches in the Modern State*, Appendix I.

secular arm ; but when his empire fell into confusion, the hierarchy stepped forward as the supreme and dominating authority, the one cohesive force, in Europe. Undoubtedly this provided at the time an urgently needed check upon the wild disorder with which Europe was threatened ; but it turned out disastrously for the spiritual witness of the Church. The assumption of secular power, the close organization of the hierarchy, culminating in the dictatorial papacy and the tyrannical administration of the Curia, paved the way for the coming catastrophe.

This will be quite obvious when we come to examine the subsequent developments. It is the explanation of the social and political basis of the Protestant Reformation. That great movement was not primarily religious, and this needs to be strongly emphasized. The recognition of the nature of the forces which rallied to Luther and made his victory possible will greatly help to enlighten us concerning the task which lies before us in the modern world. The real motives of the Protestant revolt were not unjust or shameful, but they had much less to do with faith or doctrine than has commonly been supposed. " There has been," says a modern historian,<sup>1</sup> " a natural tendency to regard the Reformation as solely a religious movement ; but this is an error . . . the motives, both remote and proximate, which led to the Lutheran revolt were largely secular rather than spiritual." And further, " The religious changes incident to the Reformation . . . were not the object sought, but the means for attaining that object."

The great Hildebrand had aimed at a threefold ideal for the Church. It was to be separated from the world. It was to be independent of the world. It was to dominate the world. It was a noble vision as it flamed before the eyes of Hildebrand, but the attempts to put it into practice speedily provoked the first signals of the storm which was to break centuries later. In England, William the Conqueror showed that he intended to be master in his own house. King John, however, was no match for

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. i. p. 653.

Innocent III, who had already humbled prouder monarchs. And when Boniface VIII promulgated the bull *Unam Sanctam*, the predominance of the papacy over all earthly princes seemed assured. It had come to pass that the Church through its hierarchy had assumed control over secular policy and jurisdiction ; but it so happened that at this time a new secular phenomenon was emerging, destined to alter the whole situation and to initiate problems which would perplex mankind for ages to come.

Up to this time Europe had been at once more thoroughly divided and more thoroughly united than in the modern period. The Continent was portioned out amongst innumerable petty princelings, dukes, and counts, who, while owning the suzerainty of greater rulers, yet guarded with jealous care their own jurisdiction and often exercised autocratic powers within their dominions. At the same time there was amongst all the small States a certain unity of life and the sense of common membership in a corporate whole. They were all alike members of the Christian commonwealth of Europe. The Holy Roman Empire may have been a failure when it became a great ideal. While it remained a humdrum fact it was a considerable success. Now, the consummation of the secular power of the Curia occurred at a time when the face of Europe was rapidly changing. The small States were coalescing into great nations.<sup>1</sup> National consciousness and international rivalries were coming into being. This birth of the nations created a crucial problem for the papacy, a problem which the Popes never faced and never solved. A great step was taken when the Italian patriots finally broke the temporal power ; but the vexed question of the relation of the Catholic Church to the modern nations can never be finally settled until the shattered Body of Christ is once again made whole.

The main tragedy of Christendom is to be seen in the fact that the papacy insisted upon carrying into a nationalized Europe the traditions of secular control which it had learned in conditions altogether different. The

<sup>1</sup> See Ramsay Muir, *Nationalism and Internationalism*.

secular life of Europe had outgrown any possible centralization in one court, whether imperial or papal; but to this fact the Popes seemed blind. The result was that the Roman Pontiff, clinging to political claims, unable to conceive the Church's function as essentially spiritual, became merely one in a crowd of jostling monarchs. The Church became one of the Great Powers of Europe, and fell into grave danger of ceasing to be the channel of the power of God. The energies and the genius of faithful churchmen were required in the service of upholding her political interests, bargaining and plotting with the mob of diplomats, winning worldly allies, browbeating weak foes and fawning upon strong ones. The Church began to look as if she were existing for her own sake, and for her own sake not as the Bride of Christ, but as a political and financial corporation whose hand was at one time or another against every nation and every nation's hand against her.

With the failure of the Councils to destroy the irresponsible despotism of the Roman Curia, the spiritual life of Europe was sacrificed. The nations, by the instinct of self-preservation, attacked the Church, which, while still the repository of the Faith, was not able to prevent her own tyrants from becoming an exacerbating influence in public affairs. The history of this conflict is very instructive. It was the real conflict. Luther's religious beliefs were of only secondary importance.

The Popes claimed the right to make and unmake kings, to bestow kingdoms and to snatch them away. Such actions may have been rare, but they proceeded from a very definite conception of the Pope's power over all monarchs and peoples. The growth of the great nations made such interference intolerable. Other expressions of the absolute papal claim grew increasingly exasperating to national pride, until they finally provoked the great severance. The objectionable practices have been enumerated with scrupulous fairness by Mr. H. C. Lea in the *Cambridge Modern History*.<sup>1</sup> They were the immediate and principal causes of the revolt.

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. i. p. 653 *et seq.*

The practice of placing papal legates and nuncios in every State gave rise to perpetual quarrels and bickering. Innocent III scored a great victory over King John of England when that monarch surrendered his kingdom to the Pope and submitted to receive it again at the hands of the papal legate Pandulf; but it was a victory destined to cost the papacy dearly. England achieved her nationhood early, and already principles were emerging which boded ill for Rome. Writing of this period, Professor Gwatkin says: "The entire future of Church and State is already shadowed out, for English Erastianism and English constitutionalism are based alike on the English belief that the law of the land ought to be supreme. Sooner or later, an English nation would reduce to obedience both Church and King if they presumed to go outside the law of the land."<sup>1</sup> Three hundred years of troubled history resulted at last in the formal declaration that henceforth the Bishop of Rome should have no jurisdiction in the English realm. But it was not only England which resisted the political claim of the Pope as expressed in the presence of the legate. Even Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain desired the Council of Seville to devise some means for keeping out of the country legates and nuncios who drained away the material wealth of the nation and constantly interfered with the royal government.

The claim of the Pope to control all patronage was a further ground of complaint. The breach between King John and Innocent III took place because that Pope insisted upon the appointment of Stephen Langton to the primacy; but such claims produced at length a most notorious scandal. In later times the profits accruing from the exercise of this power became enormous. Patronage was bought and sold in a vast and shameless traffic. The rights of lay patrons were ruthlessly set aside, and wealth was piled up in Rome at the cost of most deplorable results to the spiritual interests of many nations. The English Statutes of Provisors and Præmunire, enacted in 1351

<sup>1</sup> H. M. Gwatkin, *Church and State in England to the Death of Queen Anne*, p. 70.

and 1353 respectively, were aimed at these abuses, as was also the French measure of the Pragmatic Sanctions. The evil continued long in other places, and in 1547 it was said by the Primate of Toledo that five or six thousand Spaniards were then in Rome, bartering for benefices. He added that the majority of the canons in every cathedral chapter in Spain were so ignorant that they could scarcely read their hours; but they had bought their preferments at regulation prices and could not easily be deprived of them.

If the Church had been entirely free from secular ambitions, the Pope would have been right in combating the claims of kings and princes to appoint to ecclesiastical office. The preferments in the Church are the concern of the Church alone, when the Church is content to be the Body of Christ. But the Popes, as princes of this world with policies to carry out and worldly ambitions to gratify, cannot be defended in this controversy. Too often temporal lords were appointed bishops for the purpose of thwarting the policy of a nation when it happened to conflict with the Pope's designs. The control of patronage was practically both a weapon used by the Curia in the wretched scuffle with rival Powers and a means of personal profit to the Pontiff and the great officials of the hierarchy. The temporal power had attracted men to the Church as providing a career promising rich rewards; and these men turned the house of God into a den of thieves, and established a system of simony the details of which stink under heaven after the lapse of four centuries. Fat bishoprics were bestowed upon worthless favourites. Fools and rogues were loaded with pluralities. Religion, the Catholic religion, was betrayed, its offices neglected, its weapons allowed to rust.

Added to these evils was the absurd extreme to which the benefit of clergy was carried. No nation could freely develop healthy legal institutions while the representatives of what was to all intents a rival foreign system were scot-free of the law of the land. Possibly there is some historical vindication to be found for the doctrine of benefit of clergy. In times when the administration

of justice was uncertain and arbitrary it may have checked anarchic methods. But it led ultimately to the most serious abuses and became the favourite cloak of the worst criminals. Any common murderer would claim that he belonged to the Church, knowing well that the Church would be disposed to assume rather than to question the validity of his orders. The *Gravamina* adopted at Nürnberg in 1522 traced to this cause innumerable crimes, and the warning was uttered that unless the clergy were made amenable to the secular courts the people might rise in protest against a system which disturbed and endangered their common life.

It was, however, a more provocative application of the theory of papal supremacy which became of crucial importance and really led to the final rupture of Christendom. In the fourteenth century the system of papal absolution offered to all comers became a lucrative traffic. A scale of fees was charged for the forgiveness of sins, and the transaction was euphemistically called "pecuniary penance." Towards the close of the fifteenth century this provoked a controversy between the Curia and Spain which had important developments. The Jewish converts in the Spanish dominions claimed that they had purchased pardon for all their past heresies by their payments to Rome; but Ferdinand and Isabella demanded further confiscations from them, confiscations which of course would have enriched the royal treasury. Now, here again the Pope might be defended for resisting this, in so far as the offence was heresy, were it not for the fact that his own extortions were as shameless as those of the monarch. Moreover, the value of his indulgences would be greatly depreciated if they no longer availed against such demands as those of the Spanish monarchy. The Pope took extreme measures. He replied to Spain that his briefs were valid in all courts, thereby with a word depriving every nation of the right of administering its own laws against any offender who had obtained a papal indulgence. Indeed, the indulgences were not merely reserved for those who applied for them. They were hawked in the streets by the Pope's own pedlars.

Tetzel sold them in Germany, and the ruin of Christendom was fast approaching.

These impossible claims of the Curia, absurd and irritating in themselves, were made against national States already sore and resentful at the vast wealth of the Church and the exemption of Church property from taxation. The perpetual drain upon national resources by which large sums went from the pockets of rich and poor to maintain the magnificence of Popes and Cardinals in Rome was a constant cause of protest. Not only did these things exasperate the nations and turn their protests into Protestantism ; they also contributed to the moral decline of the papacy, the corruption of the clergy, and the prevalence of mechanical superstition. It must nevertheless be repeated that the manifold abuses did not incite any great numbers of men to attack the Catholic Faith. In 1517 Ulrich von Hutten addressed to Leo X a fierce indictment of the papacy, but the whole point of the charge is that the papacy had abused its power. There is no assault upon Catholic faith or doctrine. The Reformation was primarily a reformation of the relations between various secular Governments and the papacy as a secular power. It was not, as we have seen, essentially an uprising of the half of Christendom against the received Faith. Luther was not its originator, but its occasion.

The part played by Martin Luther has been widely misunderstood. His movement was at first purely religious and arose from his own genuine experience. That experience, however, was not an entirely new and strange portent in Catholicism. For religious psychology Luther stands with many who lived and died in the Roman obedience. Baron F. von Hügel has argued that there are three stages in the development of religion, i.e. institutional, theological, and mystical. He believes that a true Catholicism would hold these three elements in cohesion and would draw from each a rich contribution ; but historically they have often been centrifugal, tending to fly asunder and fall into rivalry. From time to time one element or another has been allowed to decline from its true place in the life of the Church, and naturally this

occurs most often with the mystical element. Periodically, however, it has reasserted itself, and often the Church has been wise enough to make room for it, and but for the secular complications in which the papacy was then involved, a place might have been found for Luther, as a place was found for St. Francis. The Franciscan problem, in its day, was no light one. The English Church in the eighteenth century had to face a similar challenge in the Wesleyan Revival; but whereas the Methodist breach with the Anglican communion was purely and solely a religious matter, the Lutheran movement early came into conflict with the secular interests of the papacy upon the question of the indulgences, and was carried on not by a monk aflame with religious passion, but by rulers and princes sore with resentment. Luther may have commenced the Reformation as a movement: but he did not condition it, and certainly he did not finish it. Other people saw to that. But Luther himself presents a deteriorating figure. The ardent reformer of the earlier years would probably have been the first to rise against the Lutheran Church which remained at the close of his life, with its incipient dry-rot and its virtual submission to the doctrine *cujus regio, ejus religio*.

The political basis of the Protestant Reformation is even more apparent in the English upheaval. There is a popular assumption that John Wycliffe was the living force which awoke England to disavow Catholicism; but Wycliffe had been dead for a century and a half before Henry VIII quarrelled with the Pope, and in that long interval Lollardy had greatly declined in influence. England broke away from Rome chiefly in the interests of her own national development. Henry's divorce was not popular, but Catherine's sons dying in infancy left the royal succession in doubt, and the nation had previously endured sufficient sorrow from such causes to make it tractable now. Henry had once distinguished himself by writing a thesis against Luther. It was a somewhat platitudinous essay, but it was orthodox, and it brought him the title of Defender of the Faith. History does not record that he afterwards experienced any

spiritual convulsions leading to a change of theological outlook, but history does record the fact that he regarded it as highly important that he should have an heir.

The Pope of that time, Clement VII, would have made no difficulties about granting the dispensation for a divorce ; but unfortunately the Emperor was Queen Catherine's nephew, and a dispute with the Emperor was not then desirable. A slashing French victory in Italy would have so weakened the Emperor that the Pope could have afforded to befriend Henry ; but lacking this turn of events, the Pope decided to do nothing. Meanwhile Cranmer offered the happy suggestion that the King should obtain the opinions of the European universities, and when several favourable decisions were gained, Henry made it clear that if the Pope still refused the dispensation a breach was certain. The future of the English Church thus trembled in the balance. When the event befell, it left Henry still a Catholic and England still a Catholic country. But it left the King supreme over the Church. He smashed Wolsey and he smashed the monasteries. He took up with Lutherans in order to strengthen his own hands ; but how little the severance from Rome had affected the vital heart of the Catholic Faith is apparent from the *King's Book* of 1543, which held to the seven sacraments, transubstantiation, prayers for the dead, invocation of saints, the celibacy of the priesthood, and the ceremonies of the Church. The English Reformation was captured by Protestants partly because the Romanists did not know when they were beaten, and partly because the Catholicism now remaining was unnaturally based upon the royal prerogative.

Even thus, it was Mary who finally made England a Protestant country. She was a sincere Catholic who did the greatest possible disservice to her own cause. Her first reception in London proves that there was no popular abhorrence of the Catholic Faith, even if there were no evidence to prove that it still possessed a strong hold upon the people. Her first mistake was the Spanish marriage. Catholic or not, papist or not, she was Queen of England, and she had allied herself with the ruler of

that race against whom the national hatred was already taking fire. She had placed herself against the national instinct, and had thus jeopardized the very Faith which she so ardently desired to serve. Her second and more disastrous blunder was the introduction of the abominable methods of persecution with which Spain, through the instrumentality of the Inquisition, was now astonishing the world. The genesis and development of the Spanish Inquisition affords an illustration of the false position of the Roman Curia amongst self-conscious nations and powerful monarchs. Originally founded in the thirteenth century with the object of combating heresy, it was not until the close of the fifteenth century that it began its real career of infamy. In 1478 it was established in Castile at the request of Ferdinand and Isabella for the immediate purpose of punishing relapsed Jewish converts. When with the advent of Torquemada its deeds became a nightmare of cruelty, Pope Sixtus IV attempted to suppress or at least to limit its operations. His attempts were vain, for the simple reason that he could not afford to thwart the will of the Spanish Government and thus to alienate a strong Power.

The Spanish rulers are responsible for the deep distrust and even fear with which for generations the average Englishman was to regard the very word "Catholic." For Mary and her advisers followed the example so illustriously set—and she did for Protestantism what Luther never could have done. She changed the national quarrel with papists into a quarrel with Catholics. She touched the popular sentiment to hot rebellion against the dogmas which seemed to require such murderous measures for their defence. But for these profound mistakes she might have been successful in fully restoring the English realm to the Roman obedience. At least, she might have arrested the progress of Protestantism and preserved the Catholic Faith and order in the Church; for her successor was a politician who would not have attempted great religious changes without excellent reasons.

There is evidence for the unreality of Henry's Refor-

mation and for the smallness of its influence upon the Catholic character of English religion in the very fact of Mary's succession being accomplished, as it was, with the greatest ease. The one stone of stumbling seems to have been the fear of certain people that the Pope would turn them out of the monastic lands upon which they were now fattening ; but they struck a bargain with Pole, and being allowed to retain their possessions, readily agreed to the repeal of Henry's laws against the Pope. The transaction suggests a cynical comment upon the English Reformation. But a Pope defended by Mary and Philip of Spain had no chance with the English people. The Virgin Queen came riding into a new age, a Protestant of sorts, amidst the ringing of bells.

Summing up the movement of the Reformation in England, Professor Gwatkin makes its national and political character abundantly clear :—

Shortly, the conception of the visible Church became chiefly national instead of Catholic, and Scripture became supreme instead of tradition. The English nation declared itself spiritually independent of all foreign jurisdiction, and reformed the English Church accordingly. The decisions of councils might be true or false, the customs of other Churches might be good or bad, but they were to have no authority in England. There was to be no more divided sovereignty. The law of the land was henceforth to be the law of the Church, enacted by the King in Parliament and interpreted by the King in his Courts of Justice ; and to that law all officials of the Church gave their promise of obedience.<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps somewhat difficult to see where the supremacy of Scripture comes in, but there can be no doubt that in the main this is a true account of what happened. The process of rending asunder the body of Christendom was now complete. The two sections were left facing each other in mutual enmity and contempt. Henceforth throughout weary centuries there was to be nothing between them but suspicion and distrust. The modern world came to birth with a wound in its heart, and of that wound it is dying before our eyes. Reacting one upon the other, the Roman and Protestant fragments have forced each

<sup>1</sup> Gwatkin, *Church and State in England*, pp 231, 232.

other's characteristic faults to extreme expression ; for while the Protestant revolt was secular in its chief motives, it did not leave the religious life of Europe unaffected.

Behind Wycliffe, behind the efforts of Councils, behind Luther, there was a religious instinct seeking expression. Could the papacy have been made democratic, that religious instinct would have found its great opportunity, and Catholicism would have come to such an interpretation of priesthood and sacraments as no secular movement could ever damage. It is fairly clear that Luther himself wanted some conception of the Eucharist which would retain its full spiritual and sacramental meaning without providing a prop for papal absolutism. That is the world of difference between his doctrine of consubstantiation and the Zwinglian conception.<sup>1</sup> But the movement, caught up by the secular currents, resulted in the dislocation of doctrinal development. At the root of all the huge modern defection from the Church of Christ lies the lamentable fact that the sins of the Roman Curia and the revolt which they provoked left the world without a truly Catholic presentation of Christ and His gospel and without the full and rounded Christian type. Rome presented a case of arrested development, against which Protestantism exhibited only an extreme reaction. Individuals might henceforth appear who did exemplify the full ideal, or who at least craved for it ; but mostly they were strangers in their own communions and unwelcome in any other. And in this pitiable condition of the Church, the Christian Faith, the Christian view of life, the Christian conception of society, were to be called upon to pass through the furnaces of modern intellectual inquiry and social theorizing. That any conception of the Catholic Faith remains and that any sort of Church endures, constitutes a great testimony to the divine origin of both. If the Church ultimately survives and flourishes in the kingdoms of men, its salvation will surely present the world with a religious fact second only in significance to the Incarnation of the Son of God upon which the Church was built.

<sup>1</sup> T. M. Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, vol. i. p. 352 et seq.

The two divorced sections continued to drift apart until both were at length confronted by the same peril. They were in equal danger of perishing out of the world. Rome had become ultramontane, increasingly absolutist and centralized. Protestantism was mostly Erastian and had become tolerant. Rome retained the Catholic dogma, a loving reverence for the past, a sublime historic consciousness, but she was aloof from modern ways and out of touch with the science and philosophy of the new era. Protestantism gave birth to theological liberalism and various forms of ecclesiastical polity. Rome retained the principle of authority but lost all freedom. Protestantism aimed at freedom but lost authority. For some time the reformed Churches strove to maintain the balance between freedom and authority, but neither was clearly conceived. The authority was partly Scripture and partly the law of the land; and dissenting sects made effective use of the one in order to upset the other. The Free Churches, divorced from Catholic tradition and opposed to Erastianism, based themselves upon what their adherents agreed to accept as the teaching of Scripture.

The Christian Faith thus fragmentarily expressed survived the political and philosophical upheavals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The earthquake came with the nineteenth century, and the first man clearly to feel the premonitory tremors was John Henry Newman. When Darwin was writing the *Origin of Species*, Newman had already made his submission to Rome. Thereafter came the historical science which seemed to shake the Roman foundations: the biblical science which undermined and confused the Protestant position: the natural science with its accompanying metaphysic which seemed to abolish the supernatural and to sweep all religion into the limbo of exploded superstitions. Protestantism approached the new problems without a weapon, for the Bible was called in question, and if religious experience were adduced, psychology came forward to propound a host of puzzles. Although there was plenty of sheer prejudice and obscurantism powerfully entrenched in the Protestant Churches, freedom of inquiry could not

be prevented in any community which claimed to have arisen in accordance with the right of private judgment. For fifty years and more Protestantism continued to decline in positive religious witness. Its intellectual condition became chaotic. In all its communions there were evangelicals and liberals, literalists and higher critics, pantheists, unitarians, and nothingarians. The fundamental doctrines of Incarnation and Atonement were cast into the melting-pot—and amongst the surely declining numbers of professing Christians there was but the vaguest idea of what they were supposed to profess. Clergy and preachers upon all hands were either explaining openly that they did not believe the creeds, or were returning to definite questions cloudy and indefinite replies.

Rome was really no better off. She decided not to notice what was happening in the world, and one strange result was that whereas she had been accused of undervaluing Holy Scripture, she now became its most rigid and conservative defender. But a more important result was that for a time Roman Catholicism was completely severed from the modern intelligence. People could not believe that Newman was honest in becoming a Catholic, for he seemed to be aware of the scientific and philosophical conclusions of the period. By her intransigence Rome lost as much as Protestantism had lost in its bewilderment. The masses of men in Protestant countries concluded that the Churches had nothing to say for the Christian Faith. The enlightened in Catholic countries concluded that the Church had no welcome for Truth.

More fundamentally damaging to religion than the position of the divided Church in face of the intellectual attack was the social effect of the cleavage. It had been apparent from the beginning. With the Protestant revolt something faded out of the life of Europe. A certain sense of human fellowship passed away. A link which had held all men in spite of differences of race and language had been broken. The alliance of the reformed Churches with secular States was deplorable, for it removed the Church's sanction from the hearts of the people as effectively as did the absolutism of the Curia. Perhaps more dangerously

for the cause of popular religion, for the nature of religious assent is not identical in Protestant and Catholic peoples. Catholic assent has naturally a greater vividness, and can therefore endure less sympathetic handling from pastors and masters.<sup>1</sup> As the new social classes became differentiated democratic aspirations forsook the Church, and the masses fell away from the Faith which was guaranteed by a State to which they owed little loyalty. They may have been entirely wrong, but the friendship between squire and parson seemed to them an offensive and defensive alliance. And the wealthy Nonconformist manufacturers were not able to hold the battered and weary proletariat in the Free Churches. Fellowship had passed. Class-consciousness was arising in its place when the financiers and journalists set about manufacturing a spurious patriotism which was at length to roll the tormented body of Europe in mud and blood.

Thus the revolt which split Christendom asunder, not only geographically and ecclesiastically, but also psychologically, has been followed by intellectual confusion, social chaos, and international strife. The world has been carried to the brink of an awful precipice of nihilism. Faith in the spiritual roots of human life has largely ceased to exert any influence, and yet all attempts to find an alternative basis in place of the Catholic Faith are already exhausted. All the modern prophets who have abandoned Christianity wear a forlorn and obsolete appearance. The most hopeful element in the situation is that irreligion has reached its *reductio ad absurdum*, while there is not the slightest sign of any new religion arising or of any of the old non-Christian religions finding acceptance. The clouds darken the sky in every direction, but it may be that upon them the Son of Man is coming to our age. It may be that the Bridegroom comes in the night watches. We shall see in the following chapters that there is in the Church a sign of recovery, a stirring of expectation. It is a time for desperate sincerity and passionate prayer.

<sup>1</sup> See Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, chap. iv.

### III

## THE SECOND THOUGHTS OF PROTESTANTISM

Now, after that a man hath walked in all the ways that lead him unto truth, and exercised himself therein, not sparing his labour ; now, as often and as long as he dreameth that his work is altogether finished, and he is by this time quite dead to the world, and come out from Self and given up to God alone, behold ! the Devil cometh and soweth his seed in the man's heart. From this seed spring two fruits ; the one is spiritual fullness or pride, the other is a false, lawless freedom. . . . And seeing that this proud and puffed-up spirit thinketh that she needeth neither Scripture, nor instruction, nor anything of the kind, therefore she giveth no heed to the admonitions, order, laws and precepts of the holy Christian Church, nor to the Sacraments.—*Theologia Germanica*.

TOWARD the close of the nineteenth century Christian apologetic was confronted with two difficult but most important tasks. One was to show that the floods of science and criticism which had surged through the world for fifty years had not shaken the Church's foundations. The other was to show that Christianity possessed the power to deliver modern society from the alarming disorders which affected it and which became more complicated every year. To many observers it seemed that the future of the Church must remain either with Romanism or with Liberalism. Scientific education appeared to have withered the old-fashioned evangelical Protestantism at its roots ; and the preoccupation of the democracies with industrial and economic problems, which were probably more acutely realized in the Protestant lands, left the reformed Churches unable to exert any strong attraction. But whilst Romanism seemed less vitally affected by the modern

movements, there was little possibility of the Roman Church stepping into the place of the decaying Churches of Protestantism. She seemed herself to be suffering from ossification. Her policy of ignoring modern developments gave her no chance of capturing a culture which was rapidly abandoning all pretence of allegiance to religious dogma. Her own absolutist constitution, fortified by the famous Vatican Decrees, kept her out of relation with the modern democratic spirit.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the political strife and acerbity in which the disruption of Christendom had been accomplished had so embittered the relation between Romanist and Protestant that they steadfastly refused to learn from each other, gloried in their mutual contrasts, and thus were increasingly unfitted to cope with the rapidly unifying problems of the world.

It was thought by many sincere people who were friendly to religion that if Christianity was to survive in the modern atmosphere it must be stripped of its supernaturalism and presented as the goal of evolution to be reached in accordance with those harmonious laws which science had revealed. The Church's future function would be that of ethical enlightenment and leadership, and to that function she must be rigidly confined. If her claim to a special supernatural basis was now destroyed, she could still turn her attention to humanitarian and social ideals. Jesus was still the world's greatest moral expert, even though His ethic might need a radical reinterpretation to make it fit the modern circumstances. The orthodox Christology must be discarded, but Christ's human appeal was still valid. The Church, in setting forth that appeal, might even find it possible to make considerable use of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hilaire Belloc maintains that there is no theoretical antagonism between the Catholic Church and democracy (*French Revolution*, p. 217 *et seq.*). If by the Catholic Church is meant something more than its present embodiments, we shall agree. It is our argument that Rome distorts Catholicism. There can be no question of her antagonism to the democratic development of the past century, and still less of democracy's antagonism to her.

the old religious phraseology. She could still speak of Incarnation and Atonement and Salvation, but the terms were to receive a new connotation which modern culture could respect. Jesus was to be explained as exhibiting the essential achievement of the human spirit, and in that sense He was to be regarded as the fullest measure of that Incarnation which is always being accomplished in humanity: His sufferings, as providing an example for all men, were in some sense vicarious; and His influence encouraged men to emancipate themselves from their spiritual limitations and thus wrought human salvation. Jesus, indeed, was in line with the moral and spiritual evolution of the race and marked out the direction of its onward course. His life and death must be viewed, not as the unique irruption of God into this world, but as the attainment by mankind of a higher ideal of life. To quote the words of an authoritative exponent of Liberal Christianity, "Complete Christianity is the personal life of discipline and freedom revealed to men in Jesus. Anything in Jesus that we cannot understand as triumphant personal life is not for us part of a complete Christianity, but at the very most of a bygone Christianity."<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the value of this conception of Jesus may be, it is at once obvious that it cannot possibly be identified with the Catholic Faith. It introduces us to a world of different spiritual values. It may bring a man to his knees before a cross, but there seems to be no reason why it should be the Cross of Calvary. Jesus is no longer the Author and Perfecter of our faith and the Captain of our salvation. He becomes the pattern of our faith and the illustrator of our salvation. He wrought out the solution of the human problem from the purely human standpoint, and our task is simply to perform the same work for ourselves in the light of His example; but there is here no faith in Him as God working out the solution of a problem which disturbs not only earth but also

<sup>1</sup> Harnack and Hermann, *The Social Gospel* (Crown Theological Library) p. 218.

heaven. This was not a mere change in terminology designed to retain the Catholic values. It was rather the introduction of new values with an attempt to preserve, as far as possible, the old terms.

Liberal Christianity was an attempt to find a place for the historical Jesus and the Christian Church in an age which had discarded faith in the miraculous and which claimed to unlock all doors with one magic key, the evolutionary principle. The indefeasible regularity of all happenings in the realm of nature precluded miracle and any special Incarnation. Progressive evolution ruled out the need for any supernatural redemption. It was yet to be discovered that the current scientific philosophy would rule out many other things until it was itself ruled out; but that, indeed, seemed an impossible contingency. The solemn belief of the latter half of the nineteenth century in the finality of its own philosophy now appears not a little ridiculous, but it was for many years a stubborn fact. While the scientific philosophy of the period was in the ascendant it gave such promise of permanence that Christians may perhaps be excused for doubting whether their Faith could any longer be maintained without some radical revision. The very possibility of Bethlehem seemed to be totally denied by the rigid doctrine of natural law now everywhere proclaimed, and the very *motif* of Calvary by the allegation that humanity had known no fall, but had continued to rise by the impulse of natural forces.

The fact that the mentality of this period felt it necessary to retain Jesus as central in human life is of great significance and of far more importance than the method by which it was attempted to formulate a faith for the times. That method, however, must be discussed. Its conclusions were strongly supported by the New Testament criticism and by the historical scholarship of the day, whose developments had a very definite bearing upon the Christological problem. The retention of the essential Catholic Christology seemed impossible in face of the critical evidence which appeared to divest the Christ of faith of all historical reality and to deprive the Jesus of

history of any supernatural origin, power, or value. The conception of Christ the Son of God conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary was said to be compounded of two views, the earlier of which held that the man Jesus had become Son of God by divine adoption, and the second, originated by St. Paul, holding that a pre-existing heavenly person had become incarnate in Jesus. It was pointed out that both these conceptions are but parallels of Jewish and pagan ideas and that there had possibly been some influence of Indian origin at work in moulding the Judæo-Christian conception of Incarnation. The miraculous element in the Gospel narratives was found to present points of similarity with the miracle stories of other religions. The sacrament of Baptism had a close relation with the pagan ceremonies of lustration, and the Christian Eucharist with sacrificial feasts of communion which could be traced to primitive mythology. The atonement and resurrection of Jesus repeat the myths which had been in the world before the dawn of history—the stories of Osiris, Adonis, Dionysus. Descent into hell and ascension to heaven were similarly to be found in pagan myth; and the enthronement of Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords was comparable to the dignity ascribed to Sakyamuni as well as to deities in Babylon and Persia, and specially to Mithras. Even the Messianic hopes which were applied to Jesus had their parallels in Roman thought, and Mithras was also regarded as the fulfilment of like anticipations.

Now, adequate scholarship always protested against the swift assumption that likeness between Christian and pagan stories indicated any conscious borrowing from pagan sources in the compilation of the Gospel narratives. "Before all things," said Professor Pfeiderer,<sup>1</sup> "we must guard against the constant practice of imagining that the inward affinity of religious conceptions implies a connection in their external history. It is absolutely unjustifiable to argue from the former to

<sup>1</sup> O. Pfeiderer, *The Early Christian Conception of Christ* (Crown Theological Library), pp. 153, 154.

the latter, for in doing this we overlook the fact that affinity of conceptions is not necessarily explained by borrowing and transmission from one sphere to another ; but that from the same psychological causes, and with like social conditions, conceptions similar in character may arise in different places quite spontaneously and independently of one another, and indeed have so arisen in numberless instances." But while the Christian Gospels do not consciously borrow from pagan mythology, it was not to be supposed that there is any objective truth in the miraculous and supernatural elements of their narratives. The man Jesus was sublimated into the Christ of faith by the Church. " Primitive Christianity has transformed the Jesus of history into the Christ of faith in that it has, after the manner of ancient animism, objectified the impression which it received of his life and death into a self-existing Christ-spirit, and has then in thought identified this spirit with the heavenly Son of Man of the Apocalypse and the Son of God and Logos of Gnosis, and has finally brought this eternal heavenly Being down to earth to become man, to die, to return to heaven, there to share the throne and sovereignty of God until His future Coming to judge the world."<sup>1</sup> The coincidence of the supernaturalism of the Gospels with persistent features of mythology nevertheless points to a deep human intuition that by the way of sacrifice alone man finds his true goal ; and so profound is man's consciousness of this truth that he is always prompted to objectify it in cosmic myth. Christianity connected its own objectification with the historical Jesus, thus providing a new ethical content to the myth and fitting itself to succeed the ancient paganism.

In this manner a clear separation was made between the Jesus of history and the Christ of the creeds ; and it was hoped that, thus divorced, both would be accepted by the modern mind. Jesus, no longer unique as God Incarnate, no longer viewed as God's own personal participation in human history, became an exemplification of that " Christ

<sup>1</sup> Pfleiderer. *op. cit.* pp. 160, 161.

spirit " which is but the better instinct of humanity already "objectified" in ancient myth and ritual. The problem now remained to delineate Him in this new light. Perhaps the task was most notably attempted by Harnack in his famous Berlin University Lectures, afterwards published under the title *What is Christianity?* When that book appeared in England, there was a widespread belief that it marked the definite beginning of a new epoch. We did not then understand how clearly it marked the end of an epoch. The profound scholarship of the great German savant, the moral passion and the genuine admiration for Jesus displayed on every page, doubtless caused many to feel that the liberal interpretation of the Gospel could be received without any sacrifice of pure and vital Christianity. For one reason, Harnack deals with the narratives not merely as one who is familiar with them as academic subject-matter, but as one who revels in them as spiritual illumination. Moreover, his teaching is not tentative in manner, but positive and forceful. He does not come to discuss and balance evidence, but to convert. He might in some passages be mistaken for an evangelical revivalist. Nevertheless, time was to make it plain that in setting out to explain to the modern mind what Christianity is, Harnack was describing with great skill and force something that Christianity never had been, something that is poorer and less effective, both as an argument and as a spiritual dynamic, than the Catholic Faith. It became clear, indeed, that Liberal Christianity not only failed to preserve the spiritual values of Catholicism, but failed to address itself to the same human problems. *What is Christianity?* ought to have been preceded by another book entitled *What is Religion?*

The Gospel, says Harnack, is a threefold message. It announces the Kingdom of God and its coming. It declares the Fatherhood of God and the infinite value of the human soul. And it proclaims the higher righteousness and the commandment of love. Upon each of these three subjects he has much to say that is true and

beautiful, and which may well be a permanent contribution to devotional literature. The discerning reader, however, easily sees that upon fundamental questions there is a wide gulf between the standpoint of the book and the Faith upon which the historic Church was founded. This appears specially in the treatment of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus, but it is at length made perfectly clear when Harnack takes up the Christological problem.<sup>1</sup> "What attitude," he asks, "did Jesus himself take up towards his Gospel? Does he assume a position in it?" To this question Harnack replies both affirmatively and negatively. At first sight his affirmative answer may seem to carry with it the full Christian conception of Christ. "He brings men to God, not only by what he says, but still more by what he is and does, and ultimately by what he suffers." And again, "He is the way to the Father, and as he is the appointed of the Father, so he is the judge as well."

But Harnack has no intention to mislead. The "incomparable service" of Jesus to mankind consists in His unique knowledge of God. He is the "personal realization" of the Gospel. If He leads men to God "by what he is and does," it is by what He is and does as the pioneer of a way of life. It is by His "experience," and not by Himself, that men are saved. This is strongly emphasized in the negative portion of the reply to the crucial question. "The Gospel, as Jesus proclaimed it, has to do with the Father only and not with the Son."<sup>2</sup> As the sincerity of the book is beyond question, the treatment of the Gospel narratives in this section can only be taken as a specimen of that strange *naïveté* sometimes found in the very learned. Harnack refers to some of the great evangelical parables of our Lord, such as the publican in the temple and the prodigal son, and blandly observes that there is no Christology in them; and he goes on to say that the message of Jesus was therefore

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *What is Christianity?* (Crown Theological Library), p. 127 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> See also Bousset, *Jesus*, chap. xi.

simpler than the Church would like to think. It does not occur to him that the simplest explanation of those stories is that they were told by God Himself when He came looking for lost men. That, at any rate, is the conclusion drawn from them by the mass of devout Christians throughout the ages.

Harnack leaves us with the conception that Jesus is the finder of God, and only in that sense the Saviour of men; and although he asserts that He is the "appointed of the Father" he does not explain what this means. It is "knowledge of God that makes the sphere of Divine Sonship." "Rightly understood, the name of Son means nothing but the knowledge of God." But if we are allowed to believe no more than this, how are we to know that in the future religious genius will not make profounder discoveries about God? Harnack sees the difficulty, and attempts to answer it by saying that Jesus knows Himself to be *the* Son. But these are only words. "*The Son*" means either a relation to God which is essentially beyond the possibility of human attainment, and thus opens the door to the whole Christological controversy, or it means only a uniqueness in point of priority: that Jesus was "*the Son*" in virtue of being the first Christian. The dilemma is not squarely faced. It is declined in the well-known words, "How he came to the consciousness of his power, and to the consciousness of the obligation and the mission which this power carries with it, is his secret, and no psychology will ever fathom it." But it must be apprehended, if not fathomed; for it concerns the very crux of the Christian faith, and upon it hang issues far greater than any academic decisions and theories. Upon it depends whether Christianity has any answer to make to the deepest distress of the heart of man and to the gravest disorders of society.

If the most important thing about Jesus is His "experience," we are in a hopeless position. He is a genius for ever remote from us. We can no more copy His experience than we can copy the chiselling of Phidias. He is a giant who has outreached his fellows. But if the

most important thing about Jesus is that He was God made flesh, there is hope for us, for then He is not merely an ideal to copy, but a Saviour with supernatural power. As the archetype of human perfection He is quite impossible as a practical solution of life's rough problems. As the Incarnate Son of God He is eminently practical. And, at any rate, the typical Christian experience of God has come to men, not in attempting to imitate the experience of Jesus but in accepting Him as their salvation. "The Gospel," says Harnack, "nowhere shows us that God's mercy is limited to Jesus' mission." But history shows us that He is the One who brings the weary and heavy-laden nearest to God. The mission of Jesus has at least provided the most effective operation of God's mercy.

We will defer consideration of what Jesus claimed for His own mission, only remarking that this dictum of Harnack, that Jesus claimed no place in it, is mere assertion. Harnack is concerned to prove that what has attracted men and what still "brings men to bliss and to judgment" is the teaching of Jesus. This he regards as being unquestionably established by history. But does history establish anything of the sort? The saints and the martyrs, the whole Church indeed, are what they are, not primarily because of the Sermon on the Mount, but because of the God in the manger and on the cross. Liberal Christianity breaks down in attempting to explain the central and most vital part of Christian experience: the communication of dynamic, the experience of being literally picked up, by Christ; the consciousness of pardon received by men, not in the act of taking up their own crosses, but in the act of looking to Christ crucified. This experience holds good in Eastern and Western Catholicism and in the most evangelical Churches of Protestantism. The sense of supernatural irruption and of the impact of invisible forces upon the soul arising from faith in Christ crucified is too constant a characteristic of Christianity to be lightly discarded. Whether expressed in the solemn ritual of a great Mass or in the

crude stanzas of a revivalist hymn, the experience is there :—

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,  
He sets the prisoner free,  
His blood can make the foulest clean,  
His blood avails for me.

Liberal Christianity cannot speak of this Catholic fact without explanations which leave the impression of unreality. The operations of the "Christ spirit" as set forth in mythology are a pale and ineffective substitute for the historic facts: and no degree of admiration for the ethical grandeur or the sublime personal experience of Jesus is capable of producing this great and characteristic Christian conviction.

The breakdown of Liberalism is more noticeable in the fact that the chief significance which it attaches to Jesus—His revelation of moral and spiritual attainment—tends to disappear when it is tested by practical application to modern problems. The precise content of His revelation grows vague, elusive. His value for the world of to-day becomes more and more difficult to define. Brought up against the grim facts of existence, against problems of economics, problems of politics, problems of international relations and class rivalry, problems of personal morality in the modern world, the "man Jesus" becomes a receding figure, doomed to exercise an ever-lessening control upon human affairs. This is well illustrated by the frank and pathetic dilemma of Naumann and the attempts made by representative liberals to reassure him.

Friedrich Naumann in his *Briefe über Religion* discusses the incompatibility between the teaching of Jesus and the accepted standards of the modern world, and he discovers a deep-lying contradiction. "Go to the Pope," he says, "go to the chief Court-chaplain, the monk, the professor, the pious lady, the pious man of business, the pious peasant, the pious beggar, the pious grey-headed wife; everywhere you will find, bound up with the spirit of surrender and brotherly love, a natural basis of common

sense, intent on the struggle for self-preservation." He goes on to argue that in order to live we must recognize and accept the struggle for existence; but upon that basis he thinks we are free to realize the higher morality of the Gospel, "so far as it is possible to do so upon such a foundation."

But this implies a very limited application of the Gospel to human affairs. There are great spheres of modern life in which Jesus simply means nothing. For example, "We do not seek Jesus' advice on points connected with the management of the State and political economy. . . . I give my vote and I canvass for the German fleet, not because I am a Christian, but because I have learned to renounce all hope of finding fundamental questions of State determined in the Sermon on the Mount."

However lamentable this conclusion may be, it is announced by Naumann in straightforward fashion, without quibble or gloss. But some exponents of Liberalism object, not to the facts, but to the conclusions drawn therefrom. It is quite true, they hold, that Jesus cannot alter the facts of the struggle for existence and has nothing to say that will be of guidance in State policy; but that ought not to cause a Christian pain. "If we have once understood the mind that Jesus wishes to produce in us, we cannot fail to see that we must become as free and independent as he."<sup>1</sup> "We serve him aright if at the same time we live in the belief that by the Father of Spirits all things are created. Thus we *believe* that in the stern pressure of circumstances we experience fatherly care, which requires us to enter into competition with others, *as a condition of real and effective life.*"<sup>2</sup>

It surely requires little perspicacity to see that this is a violent distortion and indeed a flat contradiction of Catholic Christianity. The Christian Faith is nothing unless it shows God as redeeming men from nature into grace; but this exposition of Liberalism leaves life divided between the two kingdoms, and the attempt to reconcile

<sup>1</sup> Harnack and Hermann, *The Social Gospel*, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 221.

them is extremely unconvincing. The Christ of Catholic Faith does not leave men free to accept the struggle for existence as a basic law of human life. He offers Himself as the basis, and His object is the redemption of men into a fellowship—the fellowship of the mystery. “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Naumann is right. He does not canvass for the German fleet as a Christian : his admission that he is only partially Christian is perfectly justified. His assumption that it is impossible for a modern man to be wholly Christian is simply a symptom of the world’s defection from Christ. It is the result of the wounding of the Church and society which we discussed in the previous chapter ; but its proximate cause is the implicit denial of the real and effective Lordship of Jesus. Liberalism cannot believe in the fellowship of the mystery because, in obedience to the claims of a current philosophy, it abolished the mystery. Jesus is no longer accepted as King of kings and Lord of lords, but only as the illustration of an attitude. Everything about Him except His “attitude” now becomes useless in the modern world ; but the precise value of that attitude grows more problematic, seeing that it led Him to poverty and crucifixion, while the modern man must of moral necessity commit himself to the struggle for commercial prosperity and to the claims of militarism. Jesus fades out, and there emerges “the old German God,” the local baalim of the Stock Exchange, or some big ju-ju of Fleet Street.

Such explication of what was involved in the liberal interpretation of Christianity gave pause to many in this country who had hoped that it would be the means of bridging the widening gulf between the Church and the world. The age was becoming more and more assertive of the practical nature of its criteria. It was loudly proclaiming that its feet were upon solid earth. It was believed that if only Christianity could be divested of high sacramental conceptions, and released from the weight of dogma, a Christianity made *practical* would win the allegiance of the very practical modern age. A

closer study of the modern ethos would perhaps have left the inquirer with less respect for it and with less desire to bring the Christian Faith into harmony with it. The age had been too busy to attend to religious fellowship, yet found more time to listen to drivelling musical comedy. It could not assuage the economic misery of millions of its children, though it multiplied insane luxury every week. It had discovered that it could dispense with old-fashioned solemnities like family prayer. It proceeded to dispense with prayer and even tried to dispense with families. It was supposed to possess an extraordinary sense of material values; but in the result it was to spend every day for years blowing millions of pounds into blue space.

But the desire for a practical Christianity divested of dogma and high sacramental notions is a desire for a contradiction in terms. When we come to grapple with the stern problems of life, the minimized Christianity of Liberalism breaks in our hands. The only effective social explosive is the full Christian Gospel. Catholic dogma is packed with dynamite. The characteristic doctrines of Christianity are the fundamental charter of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. The Apostles' Creed commences with the declaration, "I believe in God the Father Almighty." Now this, of course, is a dogma which Liberal Christianity receives with enthusiasm: yet it is a dogma which has been attacked by more than one scientific socialist upon the ground that it teaches people to submit to hardships of social circumstance as due to the provision of a wise but inscrutable Providence. The dogma is by no means peculiar to the teaching of Jesus, and it is capable of being defended without any reference to Jesus; but it is undeniably more firmly grounded in Christianity than anywhere else, and in Christianity it is grounded upon the Incarnation of God in Christ. Through Jesus the belief became common property, but it was bound up with the belief that in Him was visibly displayed the glory of the only-begotten. It is philosophically possible to separate the belief in God's

Fatherhood from the Catholic faith in Christ, but in practical spiritual experience it is not so easy. Belief in the Fatherhood of God has been reached by men, but has not succeeded in maintaining itself; and amongst the Jews, where it secured its surest footing, it most noticeably issued in the Messianic hope. "I believe in God the Father Almighty" is in the Creed only because men found it possible to believe also "in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord."

The belief in God's Fatherhood implies a faith that the roots of human life and of the whole universe are in absolute and eternal love. It implies that things are rightly intended at bottom, and that human nature, in spite of all its sin and perversion, is good in its foundations. This is sound Catholic orthodoxy. If I deny the Incarnation, if I deny that God was Christ, I do in fact open the door to questions about God's nature; and without Christ as the absolute revelation there is plenty of room for such discussion. I open the door to Mr. H. G. Wells, with his Saviour God and the human race together engaged upon a nameless adventure in the inscrutable presence of Veiled Being. But if I believe that the roots of everything are in Veiled Being, I do not know what anything is at bottom. If I believe in God the Father I can legitimately suppose that the amelioration of the human lot is intended by the primal Cause. If I believe in Veiled Being I cannot be sure that the whole human concern will not be swept for ever into oblivion before breakfast to-morrow morning. I have, then, no reason for supposing that my efforts are essentially worth while. I have no idea of what relation may exist between my desire for social justice and the intention of the ultimate creative will. It may be that all the present personal, class, and international rivalries are the fullest expression of what is intended in this world; and thus the motive of self-sacrifice becomes inhibited at the start. Unless I believe in the Divine Fatherhood, I have no basis for a democratic and dignified doctrine of human brotherhood. But it cannot be denied that this fruitful faith

has for its securest root the conviction that Jesus Christ was God Himself present in human conditions—not the conviction that Jesus was the discoverer of the Divine Fatherhood, but that He was its effective expression.

For when I say, “and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord,” I declare not only that I know what God is, but also that I know what every man is. I know that the poorest, the vilest, has family connections with the King of kings. The blood that was shed on Calvary proclaimed that every man is of the blood royal. If we really had got it into our heads and hearts that a human mother once bore a baby who was the Eternal Son of God, we should never rest until we had made of this sin-stained and battered humanity something more worthy of such a faith. If God has become man, human personality is sacred, and we ought to flame with holy anger against all that debases it and against every interest vested in vice. No social reformer can safely set out without some doctrine of man; and there is no doctrine of man so full of revolutionary hope as this: that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Even the much ridiculed doctrine of the Holy Trinity is full of social significance.

And the Catholick faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance. . . . And in this Trinity none is afore or after other: none is greater or less than another; But the whole three Persons be co-eternal together and co-equal.

It sounds like an arithmetical nightmare; and, in spite of the fourth chapter of Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, there are many who persist in supposing that the doctrine of the Trinity is arithmetic. They are mistaken. It is sociology. The problem of all societies is to harmonize social unity and solidarity with personality and individual liberty. The problem has never been solved in human history. Upon one hand is the Scylla of the absolute State which says society is one. On the other hand is

the Charybdis of anarchy which declares persons are many. If society is of the very nature of God, there is hope for the ultimate solution of the intrinsic human problem. If God is a lonely unit and nothing more, then the very solution of our problem would be foreign and contradictory to the Divine Nature. Obviously it is the trinitarian who has the best argument against profiteers and supermen.<sup>1</sup>

From the standpoint of ardent social reform, however, the Christian doctrine most often attacked is that of the Life Everlasting. The Christian Faith, of course, more than any other religion places emphasis upon this, because the Christian Faith has the deepest respect for human personality and teaches the resurrection of Christ. But it is attacked as causing men to submit to present and real evils in the hope of receiving a future reward in heaven. It keeps poor men quiet while their oppressors bleed them white. The whole diatribe is very familiar ; and it was a common thing to find liberals assuring this world that they were not much concerned about the next world. As a matter of plain fact, the denial of the Life Everlasting is the most deadly insult to all social hope. It will eventually paralyse all social effort. No society can exist apart from persons ; and if persons are to be obliterated at death, there can be no permanent society. Consequently, all attempts at perfecting human society are like the game which children play with the sands of the shore. No matter how much sacrifice and labour have gone to its making, the ocean of eternal oblivion will presently swallow the edifice. If Christ is to become Lord of this world, it seems necessary to convince men that He is Lord of all worlds. Christendom cannot be built upon the denial of our concern with the next world.

Even the doctrine of Eternal Punishment is more genial and kindly than such denial. It does at least regard a man as a being so powerful and wonderful that he can

<sup>1</sup> See sermon, "The Trinity and the Social Revolution," in *The New Catholicism*, by W. E. Orchard, D.D.

make for himself a road into the bottomless pit and stay there for ever if he so will. And if that possibility is denied, essential human freedom is also denied.

In abandoning the Catholic Faith there was no possibility of the Church's gaining effectiveness as a social instrument, though the need for clear guidance amidst the darkening problems of society became increasingly imperative. When for all practical purposes the sanction of Jesus was either denied or equated with the modern ethic which many believed to be destructive of the best human values, the Church had either to abdicate or to seek some other interpretation of the Gospel. The confusion and distress of many informed and devoted lovers of the Church became acute, even if there was no loud expression of their sorrow. In England the New Theology movement came to a sudden collapse. For a brief moment it had seemed to give promise of stemming the tide, which was flowing away from the Churches. It made a desperate attempt to harmonize Christianity with the assumptions of the contemporary mind and it was suffused with a genuine social passion. Preached by the Rev. R. J. Campbell with great earnestness, and favoured by his winsome spirituality and personal charm, it attracted a large section of ministers and laymen in almost every denomination in this country. It was, however, but one application of Liberalism, and it was doomed to share the fate of the general movement; for already forces were astir which were to undermine the whole position and to create a new and astonishing situation.

In spite of the scholarship, the eloquence, and the unquestionable sincerity enlisted in its service, Liberalism has entirely failed to strengthen the hold of the Church upon men's hearts. It cannot be said that it has not had a fair trial. Rome, indeed, stoutly opposed it, but it established itself in Protestantism, and the Protestant Churches have continued to decline. This really is not surprising, for Liberalism has no conception of the Church to offer, and it was this that the reformed Churches had always sorely needed. It tended rather to minimize

the need of organic Church-life. It discovers no well-defined place for priesthood or sacraments, and it cannot be made to explain them without coming perilously near to explaining them away. It gives no vital value to worship. It provides no very valid motive for foreign missions and finds difficulty in establishing the right of Christian propaganda in lands already dominated by the great non-Christian religions. It did not fortify the Church in any consciousness of a unique function. It did not prevent Protestantism from continuing to fall to pieces, and it failed to restore the people of the Western world to religious allegiance. The refusal of Rome to have any dealings with it made deeper the gulf between Protestant and Catholic. It now went down to the foundations of the Faith. The Church of England was cloven between Catholicism and Liberalism, the old evangelical element sinking into obscurity. The Free Churches were divided between evangelicals and liberals, but the former were failing in prestige and influence. Meanwhile the world roared on its way, hurrying to the frightful calamity which as yet was hidden from its eyes.

But already, as we have indicated, new forces were beginning to work. Their sources were various, but they combined to shake the whole edifice of modern Liberalism by attacking both its foundations and its superstructure. Its foundations were in the science and metaphysics of the post-Darwinian period, which inculcated scepticism toward any doctrine of supernatural intervention in the course of evolution. Religion must therefore be presented as the means whereby the evolutionary process reaches self-consciousness in men. The superstructure of Liberalism was necessarily a Christianity divorced from the Catholic dogmas of salvation and offering an interpretation of Christ which made Him the typical example of the evolutionary process reaching its supreme attainment in humanity. The philosophical and scientific assumptions which were supposed to have made Catholicism for ever impossible with open-minded and enlightened men were now to be exhibited as possibly

quite unwarranted and at least hasty and ill-founded; while upon quite independent grounds the interpretation of Jesus as merely the efflorescence of the human spirit was now to be exhibited as based upon incomplete criticism and dubious history.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century a working partnership had been established between the scientific theory of Evolution and the philosophy of Absolute Idealism, and this had exercised an enormous influence upon Protestant theology. This was noticed by Professor William James in his lectures on "Pragmatism."<sup>1</sup> "By the more radical wing of religious philosophy I mean the so-called transcendental idealism of the Anglo-Hegelian school, the philosophy of such men as Green, the Cairds, Bosanquet, and Royce. This philosophy has greatly influenced the more studious members of our Protestant ministry. It is pantheistic, and undoubtedly it has blunted the edge of the traditional theism in Protestantism at large." The attacks made upon that philosophy by James, Bergson, Schiller, J. Ward, and others, have now blunted its edge in turn, if indeed they have not irreparably damaged its reputation. It has been claimed that the theory of the Absolute is the greatest dialectical triumph of modern philosophy<sup>2</sup>; but the attack was directed against the principle of founding philosophy solely upon dialectic, and the critics of Absolutism held that no dialectic could yield more than an abstraction of reality. Dialectic, they asserted, provided an Absolute which was a unified totality only because the discordant and irreducible elements were left unregarded, and necessarily so, by intellectual processes which by their very nature were unable to grasp the full-blooded, concrete reality of existence. It was further objected that the philosophy of Absolute Idealism was unable to find a place for the characteristic individuality of personal experience: that it was totally unable to show how human experience was a mode of

<sup>1</sup> *Pragmatism*, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Wildon Carr, *The Problem of Truth*, p. 29.

absolute consciousness: that it solved the enigma of the One and the Many only by depressing the second term to a practical insignificance.

This, of course, was a fundamentally subversive criticism unless it could be satisfactorily met; and up to the present no conclusive answer has been given to it. In appreciating the criticism of absolutism, however, we are not necessarily committed to the philosophical theories advanced in turn by the various critics; but we are justified in claiming that we are now free to suppose ourselves to be living in a universe in which battle, murder, and sudden death, love, hate, and sacrifice, are of the very stuff of reality: a universe in which real sin and real redemption are possible, in which man can thwart and grieve his Maker, in which God can suffer for His children, in which genuine contingencies arise, and in which new and spontaneous activity may be possible for personality, whether human or divine. We are living in a Universe in which God can take sides.<sup>1</sup> This may not warrant the revival of the whole scholastic philosophy of theism, but it does leave us free to take Incarnation and Redemption in their genuine Catholic sense, as particular historical realities, whatever philosophical setting we may afterwards provide for them.

Just as there was a partnership between the philosophy and the scientific theorizing of the post-Darwinian period, so there is a convergence between the philosophical criticism and the scientific hypotheses now emerging. While Absolute Idealism has been called upon to face a most formidable onset, the theory of evolution by the rigid and mechanical operation of natural law is now assailed with skill and vigour by many competent scientists and thinkers. The connection between a philosophy of the Absolute and a scientific theory of development is possible only when the underlying assumption of both is that the structure of the Universe is fundamentally mechanical. The evolution of species and of the human race can then be explained either in terms of natural law or in the terms of a syllogistic thesis; and to some minds the

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Balfour, *Theism and Humanism*, p. 21.

resulting conception of the Universe seems worthy of being described in lofty phrases. The chief objection to it, however, is that it gives a Universe in which nothing ever has happened or ever will happen, in which the evolutionary process is only the explication of original implicates to which nothing is ever added, and in which human existence, with all its sorrow and triumph, with all its centuries of tumult and colour, is but a phase in the self-glorification of some inscrutable Moloch of law and logic. Philosophy was now breaking into open rebellion against this conception, and science was at the same time raising the standard of revolt.

A more thorough investigation of biological facts produced the conviction that organic evolution could no longer be explained upon a mechanistic hypothesis—a conclusion which controverted the views of Weismann and his influential school. Darwinism as interpreted by Weismann had taught that a sufficient explanation of organic evolution is given in the theory of natural selection operating upon numbers of small and indeterminate variations; and this Neo-Darwinism denied the Lamarckian theory of the transmission of characteristics gained by individuals in their more or less purposed efforts. But if the Lamarckian theory be wrong, Neo-Darwinism provided none to replace it. Given the necessary variations, it could attempt to show why some persisted and others did not, but natural selection did not explain the rise of variations. Natural selection, indeed, cannot account for the evolution of some organs.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to conceive that the occurrence of innumerable small and indeterminate variations and the operation of natural selection can explain the appearance of an organ which, in order to be of any value, must necessarily be a structure of marvellous and delicate complexity and would perform no function of survival value if it were anything less. Moreover, long experimenting in artificial selection had shown that modification thus produced

<sup>1</sup> See Bergson on the evolution of the eye, *Creative Evolution*, p. 81.

is only very small and diminishes with successive generations. There is now considerable support for the view that effective variations mostly appear suddenly and are transmitted in their completeness, and that such variations may persist even when the principle of natural selection does not specially favour them. Variations thus occurring and known as "mutations" are not defects or deformities: they become characteristic of new species and may sometimes be new organs perfect in their functioning.<sup>1</sup>

No mechanistic theory seems capable of explaining these phenomena, nor can the facts of functional renewal and the restitution of organs be thus accounted for, yet these facts provide some of the most fascinating revelations of modern biology.<sup>2</sup> So far from the evolution of man being explicable by mechanical theories, it is now proved that the humblest animal life and behaviour require some other hypothesis. Henri Fabre and others have investigated the phenomena of instinct with most important results, by which mechanical theories seem finally precluded. Thus, while the physicists were teaching us to interpret matter in terms of force, the biologists were discovering consciousness and effort in evolution, and the philosophers were asserting that consciousness is personal.

The changed conception of the method of evolution was bound to have a profound effect upon philosophy, and probably the most portentous sign of that influence, though by no means the only one, is the work of M. Bergson. With Bergson we are in a world in which, if there is as yet no clear religious certainty, at least the grass is green and the birds sing: a world in which the heart is allowed to have "reasons of its own." The great value of Bergson is of course twofold. He limits the legitimate sphere of mathematical logic and sets up a claim for "intuition"; and he restores spontaneity and genuine origination,

<sup>1</sup> Bateson and de Vries, *Mutations*.

<sup>2</sup> For the whole subject see McDougall, *Body and Mind*, p. 246 *et seq.*

which the whole course of philosophical and scientific thought had for so long been driving out. It is hardly too much to say that he has reopened the door to the supernatural and the miraculous. One need not accept his *élan vital* precisely as Bergson proposes it, or one may wish to know more about it; but so long as Bergson leaves us free to discover its full reality by intuitive methods, the testimony of religious experience and the Holy Catholic Faith become more readily defensible in the eyes of the modern world. The Catholic view of Christ cannot be absurd in a Universe which is itself the effect of spontaneous and creative force. The Catholic testimony to Christ cannot be prejudged if "intuition" is a legitimate pathway to reality.

But Bergson, after all, is but a sign of the times. His subtlety and lucidity, together with his wonderful style, have won him an admiring audience; but it is doubtful if even he marks the full measure of the reaction against mechanical views of man and the Universe. He does afford evidence, however, that the foundations upon which Liberalism was built are shifting. He has shown us a Universe in which God and men may really act, even though he has little to say about God.

It was from another quarter that the main liberal position was jeopardized. The mere assault upon its underlying philosophical assumptions had done nothing positively to establish the Catholic claims, although it had established their right to be heard. It is doubtful how far any recent philosophy can be considered actually to support the Catholic conceptions. Mrs. Hermann made a valuable attempt to relate Christianity to the speculations of M. Bergson, but while there is much that is illuminating in her discussion, one rises from it with a suspicion that the Christ who comes by the *élan vital* is not identical with the Christ of the Catholic Faith and is not easily to be distinguished from the Jesus of Liberalism.<sup>1</sup> But whatever à priori estimate of Jesus might now be legitimate, the whole situation has been altered

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Hermann, *Eucken and Bergson*, p. 174 et seq.

by the latest studies of His life as narrated in the Gospel narratives.

The eschatological school have committed some sins of over-emphasis, but they have succeeded in showing that Jesus was certainly nothing like a professor of moral philosophy, and that He, at any rate, did not regard Himself merely as the initiator of a "way of life." The eschatological passages now assume an importance which liberals had overlooked. They become central in His teaching and of crucial importance for the interpretation of His self-consciousness. They prove that He did assume the central position in His Gospel; that He did not consider His mission to be one of humane enlightenment, but rather an adventure with supernatural implications. The Jesus of the Gospels is the hero of a divine romance. He has come to accomplish a work of supernatural significance and He deliberately assumes an appropriate attitude. We cannot neglect this element in the Gospel without destroying the meaning of the whole. What then remains is no spiritual guide for men, but a figure who is simply impossible as an exemplar for the world—one who lays down, as absolute, ethical commands which we cannot accept as binding upon the twentieth century. In other words, Liberalism was now accused of obliterating the sanctions upon which Jesus rested His teaching, with the result that His teaching must be either distorted or ruled out by the modern world.

Now, Liberalism had always much to say concerning the "experience" of Jesus; but if we are to trust that experience we cannot go back when we find that it led Him to make abnormal and superhuman assertions about His own person and authority. There remain only two alternatives: either we must give Him up as an enigma, a remote puzzle which the modern world cannot and does not specially need to solve; or we must accept Him as God. The closing passages of Schweitzer's book were perhaps not designed to recommend the former alternative, but to enforce the profundity of the problem of His personality. The radical wing of the eschatological

school may, indeed, represent Him as an enthusiast misled ; but they cannot destroy the fascination which He continues to exercise after two thousand years. " The strange Man upon the cross " will not allow us to relegate Him to oblivion ; but then neither will He allow us to make a selection from His *obiter dicta*. If we want to accept His teaching we find that we must accept Him. We are not left with an ethic which is all daylight or with an " experience " which prompts us to copy it. We are left with a Person who is at once the world's greatest mystery and the world's greatest challenge. The Sermon on the Mount is not to be understood apart from the assumptions of Jesus concerning Himself which are found in the eschatological discourses and elsewhere. Indeed, those assumptions are most impressive in the passages where they are half-concealed or only indirectly expressed. But His demands upon men are no longer impossible. Naumann's dilemma is no longer hopeless. For Jesus is neither a spiritual giant reaching out beyond his brethren nor a pioneer whose work has been superseded. He is God reaching down to His children.

This critical re-estimate of Jesus was supported by a corresponding but independent re-estimate of primitive Church history. Catholicism was now shown to have its roots in Christian origins. Large developments of practice there had undoubtedly been, as there had obviously been development of doctrine ; but the Pauline Churches could not now be considered to have been much like any modern Protestant sect. Nor was it now possible to convict St. Paul of distorting and misrepresenting the message of Jesus. His work was not to propagate the " simple teaching " of Jesus. He had to set forth the experience which Jesus produced in him and in others ; and this is precisely the crux of the whole matter. Liberalism had supposed that essential Christianity was the reproduction in the believer of the experience which had come to Jesus, and consequently regarded St. Paul as having side-tracked Christianity ; whereas, from its earliest origins, Christianity had always been the produc-

tion in the believer of an experience caused by Jesus. From the beginning this experience had tended to express itself in the direction of Catholicism.<sup>1</sup>

The renewal of orthodoxy is thus the way immediately pointed out for modern Christianity. For some of us who had built our hopes upon Liberalism, religion has now come back as a soul-scorching and overpowering reality. Jesus Christ becomes our Lord, our Saviour, our God, and we recognize with joy that we are talking about the very things that St. Paul and St. Francis and Bunyan and Wesley talked about. There has broken upon our minds, with all the force of a great surprise, the discovery that our modern search for truth has led us back to the Catholic Faith. Cradled and reared in Protestantism as we have been, we are, moreover, forced to admit that Rome, no matter what her faults and failings, has kept that Faith. She has kept the Faith which is the foundation of social hope, even when she has allied herself with the forces of reaction. She has refused to traffic with the spirit of the age. Like the Bourbons, she forgets nothing and she learns nothing; but we felt that what she had remembered was, at the moment and for us, much more valuable than what we had learned. Whether there will be any great movement toward Rome remains to be seen, and the propriety and wisdom of any such movement will be discussed in a later chapter. One thing that has followed the perception of the fundamental strength of orthodoxy is a craving in the younger generation of Protestants for the Church, One, Holy, and Catholic; but there are no clear signs that they are prepared to regard Rome as the goal of their desire. On the other hand, no Protestant Church can hope to relieve this nostalgia. Christianity, seen to be a supernatural irruption into the

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, in *Theo.og. Lit. Zeitung*, January 16, 1909, says: "We must assign to the rise of the Catholic element an earlier date than Protestants have generally admitted. . . . Well-informed Protestant historians will no longer feel scandalized at the statement that some of the principal elements of Catholicism go back to the apostolic age and belong to its very heart." Harnack is influenced by Wernle's *Beginnings of Christianity*.

course of human history, is seen to necessitate the Church. This had been dangerously near to being discarded by Protestantism, and now, amidst all the jumble of sects and denominations, we are thrown back upon their divine Foundation. We seek their fulfilment. Has that all along existed in Rome, or is Rome herself, in spite of her adherence to the Faith, only a partial and fragmentary expression of the Church of Christ? Was Protestantism all a wild mistake or a work of the devil? Does it contain anything of value which has not been more effectively preserved by Rome?

To these questions some answers must now be given. If Rome is considered to be at fault, as from the previous chapter we should suppose; and if Protestantism has come so near to surrendering the central citadel of the Faith as we have now seen, in what direction are we to look for the true Catholic Church which appears to be the only adequate vehicle of the Christian religion and its only sufficient witness to the world? What analysis or what synthesis will yield the result for which we crave? Toward what ideal are we to bend our efforts? These are the living issues of this hour, when the modern world as we have known it lies bleeding and dying before us: while civilization is threatened with disruption: and while the Church exists only in fragments, none of which alone has power to avert the threatening tragedy. Through the deep shadows there seem to shine some gleams of light. They may be phantom fires that will mislead and mock us; but they may be the first beams of sunrise brightening distant peaks. We have been taught to expect the sunrise, however, and we will not yet despair.

## IV

### THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL

My common conversation I do acknowledge austere, my behaviour full of rigour, sometimes not without morosity ; yet at my Devotion I love to use the civility of my knee, my hat, and hand, with all those outward and sensible motions which may express or promote my invisible Devotion. I should violate my own arm rather than a Church ; nor willingly deface the name of Saint or Martyr. At the sight of a Cross or Crucifix I can dispense with my hat, but scarce with the thought or memory of my Saviour.—  
SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

THE outbreak of the Great War and its wearisome progress, the inability of European society to deliver itself from the awful menace of its own worst factors, convinced many thoughtful people that unless there were a speedy revival of religion modern civilization was doomed. The sporadic attempts at revival made by the Free Churches in England in recent years had proved lamentable failures. The war-time mission organized by the Church of England made no visible impression upon the nation. Yet the moral and spiritual situation was growing desperate. While Britain was engaged in the most bloody war of all history, while the maimed bodies of men were to be seen in every town and hamlet, while raiding aircraft brought death and destruction to teeming cities and quiet countryside, a British general felt constrained to write a public condemnation of the salacious flippancy of the amusements patronized by huge crowds ; and a British admiral wrote a letter to a great religious society, lashing the immorality and spiritual lethargy of his fellow-countrymen. The domestic upheaval caused by the war threw thousands of men and women into temptations which they had never

been properly trained to resist. The liquor traffic was reaping enormously increased dividends. The vulgar and materialistic section of the Press became more loud-mouthed and dictatorial than ever. The tone of public life and certain features of the current political methods gave rise to alarm amongst men of sober judgment and pure ideals. In nearly all the belligerent countries the Church of Christ and the Christian Gospel seemed to exert no effective influence; and no other force was capable of moulding a public ideal at all commensurate with the tragic needs of the time. The first generous enthusiasm of the Allies soon spent itself; and the carefully organized patriotism of Germany was of no avail to create a noble moral practice amongst her people. German newspapers lamented the decline of German business morality, while German preachers inveighed against the gross and widespread departure from standards of decency in the sex relation. And if the Central Powers started with conceptions of human life befitting the Stone Age, it must be said that but for the Christian idealism of President Wilson the methods and aims of the Allies would have been in danger of becoming completely Prussianized.

But if the world was in confusion and distress, the Church also was everywhere in straits. In these days a searching question has been put to her. Upon her own plane she must now face the alternative which in the sphere of material dominion the militarist maniacs of Germany so needlessly put to themselves: *Weltmacht oder Niedergang*. Is the Church, clad in beautiful garments, to arise and speak a healing word to a stricken world; or is she to continue to fall away into an insipid obscurity? That is the issue which must be as a sword in our bones, disturbing and alarming us until we have finally accepted its challenge.

The situation, with its sombre shadows and vivid lights, is one of absorbing interest. Side by side with the fact of the paralysis and impotence of the Church is the fact that not for centuries has the Catholic Faith had the oppor-

tunity which the social and intellectual situation now provides. The question is whether that Faith can now build with sufficient speed a barrier against the destroying floods which threaten to sweep the Church away. Again, in a day in which men are swayed to a passionate assertion of liberty, we have a new and wonderful appreciation of Catholic psychology. And the question is whether the Catholic Faith and order can be stated in modern terms with sufficient celerity and cogency to preserve society from plunging into nihilism. The echoes of the world conflict will reverberate for years to come in every sphere of human life, and no man may estimate how long the world will lie beneath the shadow of a great danger. Continents have been deluged in blood, and treasure has been poured forth in measures which have drowned arithmetic. Normal sanctions have been in abeyance. Swiftly changing mandates have been substituted for long established law. What may be the ultimate effect of all this upon individual character and public standards no living soul can tell. The future, the closely immediate future, of the human race is a dark riddle; and yet men's hearts and minds turn towards a new world-order in which union and concord shall be dominant and in which all mankind shall labour in co-operation for some common end.

But even here there is danger. If statecraft can avert ruinous catastrophes, if the shattered fragments of human life can be combined, there is still danger. It is the danger that a world-union may be consummated around a core of mere political and material interests, without any heed to the witness of the Church, and regarding the life of man as totally comprehended by material interests. What if in the reconstruction the builders are allowed once more to set at naught a certain Stone? The new edifice would most likely collapse very quickly in universal anarchy and despair.

For these and many other reasons there is a terrible and glorious challenge confronting the Church. The challenge is to provide the essential supernatural motive

for a new world-order, and when one contrasts the enormity of this task with the feebleness of the Church, one is left gasping. No Church exists adequate to the situation. Nevertheless we know the Church's needs, and that is something gained. There is, too, the unquestionable fact that the promise of future religious development seems to lie in the direction of a renewed orthodoxy and a Catholic revival. We have seen how the movements of modern thought have shaken the foundations of the materialistic and mechanistic theories which had ruled the Western world for half a century. To many religious people who have followed the movement of thought it is no longer possible to find in Liberalism a satisfactory statement of the Christian Faith. We feel in the very quick of our minds that Liberalism misses just the precious heart of the matter.<sup>1</sup> The more we have examined the central dogmas of orthodoxy, using the word "dogma" after the more recent fashion,<sup>2</sup> the more we have realized their fundamental sanity.

Good observers are aware of a subtle change of mood within the Church, the first premonitory expressions of a renewed confidence, at the very moment when problems and perplexities press most heavily upon her.

The signs are not yet tangible. We have no evidences of a sweeping religious revival, and some may still believe that Christianity is in its final decadence. But others know that the particular negation, the special hesitation, the "honest doubt," and the morbid scepticism of our generation are already doomed and soon will be numbered amongst the old-fashioned things which never can be revived. The Christian Faith is not at the end of its history. It is at the beginning of a new era of positive power and influence. The day has come when every man

<sup>1</sup> See L. P. Jacks, *A Psychologist Among the Saints*, specially the psychologist's death-bed criticism of Harnack's *What is Christianity?*

<sup>2</sup> For a lucid statement of the relation between dogma, doctrine, and theology, see Forsyth, *Theology in Church and State*, chaps. i. and ii. Tyrrell's *Through Scylla and Charybdis* contains several valuable essays upon the subject.

who prides himself only upon being "modern" actually looks like a photograph twenty years old. The only completely up-to-date person in the world is Jesus Christ.

Some day the history of this change will be written, and a fascinating volume it will make. The historian will mark the new mood which came upon philosophy and science. He will record the effect of psychological research. He will register the course of New Testament criticism and the unlooked-for rediscovery of the historical Christ. But we who live in the current of these changes, who feel the fresh air blowing in our faces and catch sight of the first rays of morning, can perhaps best describe our experience by saying that the Gospel has come to us as the grand romance. It is no longer a problem or an argument. It is an adventure. God rides into the arena of the world's amazing tumult. The palms are at His feet : the thorns are upon His head. Salvation has come, and it is highly exciting.

The Child that was ere worlds begun  
(. . . We need but walk a little way,  
We need but see a latch undone . . .)  
The Child that played with moon and sun  
Is playing with a little hay.

The romantic approach to life yields a more full-blooded satisfaction and a deeper knowledge than the merely scientific approach ; and the genius of the Gospel is essential romance. The impossible thing has occurred. The forlorn hope has been realized. The threatened citadel has been relieved at the very last moment. The incredibly good news is true. The romantic thing has happened to the human race, and it happens to every man who comes to Jesus Christ saying, " Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." When we see and feel the Gospel in this way it becomes once again a vivid reality, a mighty energy, beside which all modern systems seem paltry and partial and palsied. It becomes as new as God's fresh moment, and compared with it all modern systems appear withered and worm-eaten. The facts

are large and plain. A Child was born into an ordinary home amid all the work and worry of the poor. He learned to labour with His hands. Presently He arose and said to the world, "Come unto Me"; and when men paid heed to Him and came, they found that for the first time in their lives they had come home. They saw Him in the little villages and in the streets of Jerusalem. They saw Him hanging upon a cross. And they saw God. You have to make your theology out of that; but you must always remember that the higher you place Jesus, the nearer you bring God to men. If the Child of the manger and the Boy of the village home and the Man of the lonely hill is now upon the throne of the Universe, then every one is better off for it. The greater this romance becomes, the sweeter grows the sunshine and the more hopeful the human outlook. For in this story, you and I and the man next door are leading characters, and a surprising adventure has befallen us.

In the first place we have found out who we are; and that is something which no man fully knows by any other means. The human race has tried very hard to feel at home on the earth, but all its philosophies and all its religions are like the attempts of a man to remember his name and address. He is lost, like mankind. But the Gospel is the coming of the astonishing truth that we are really the missing heirs: the lost children of the King. Some one has come and told us what we wanted to know, but could not discover; and when we have listened, we have no more doubt upon that point. We are found. That is the first element in the romance of salvation as it touches us. We know all the long names which purport to describe the experience, but we prefer to dwell upon the romantic fact that while we were walking about upon a strange star which we called the earth (because we knew no other name for it), some one touched us on the shoulder, and when we turned round we found ourselves looking into the face of God. But there is more in it. When we are found, the first experience is not

pleasant. The man who had forgotten his own name and address now remembers that he is wanted by the police. The missing heir has turned up, but he has a reason for not wishing to face his friends and relatives. That is called conviction of sin. It has been unfashionable amongst clever people with bad memories. It has even been demonstrated to be mere illusion—by people who could not make up their minds whether the mountains and the sea and their own mothers' faces were illusion or not. Nevertheless there has always been a haunting uneasiness at the back of the mind of wandering man :—

The thing on the blind side of the heart,  
On the wrong side of the door.

Conscience really does make cowards of men. And when they learn from Jesus the stark and startling truth about themselves, their first impulse is to wish Him gone. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." But Jesus does not go. He stays with them and tells them stories about prodigal sons and lost sheep, until the astounding certainty strikes in upon them that the Good Shepherd Himself is actually talking to them. One has come out of the dreadful unseen, from the blind side of the heart and the wrong side of the door, and He says to a shame-faced woman, "Go in peace and sin no more." And we "who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." All that Jesus said the shepherd did for the sheep, all that the father did for the prodigal son, God was doing for mankind ; and He was doing it in Jesus.

This is the Good News ; and there is nothing within the horizon of serious modern thought that makes it ridiculous. There is, of course, always the old feeling that it is too good to be true ; but then nothing is too *good* to be true. And we happen to have noticed the fact that the more glorious the truth which we believe about the Universe, the better can we do our day's work.

Now, to those who once felt the charm of Liberalism and afterwards realized its inadequacy, the reaction to

orthodox dogma carries with it a new appreciation of Catholicism. We believe that Catholicism is the only possible atmosphere in which orthodoxy can be conveyed to the twentieth century. At any rate, we can see no other vehicle capable of carrying all we think and feel about Christ; and we desire to be fastened to the objective Faith and the Christian fellowship by stronger cords than those which Protestants have employed. There is an awakening of Catholic consciousness in most unlikely quarters. One sign of this is the growing sense of the sinfulness of the schismatic and sectarian spirit and the various suggestions put forward with the object of drawing denominations closer together. While the Free Churches of this country were considering the possibility of more intimate association, the Wesleyan Conference was called upon to discuss a resolution which, if adopted, would have resulted in the orientation of Methodism toward the Church of England. There have been tentative movements in the direction of alliance between Anglican and Eastern Catholicism; and without doubt the old denominational acerbities are dying fast. But within the Free Churches there is growing up a new respect for Catholic practices, and the adoption of liturgical forms of worship is rapidly increasing. The younger generation of Free Church ministers is emphasizing the importance of sacraments, and many wish to see the sacrament of Holy Communion recognized as the central act of worship and given a corresponding prominence in Church life. There is in the Churches at the present time a craving for the Church, and it would seem that the renewed respect for orthodox dogma, in contact with the general human situation, will create at least the possibility of a great Catholic revival. For some years past, in the countries where Rome is the chief representative of Christianity, Catholicism has received the friendly attention of groups of intellectuals, particularly in France. In Germany, as in England, there have arisen more synthetic movements which, if they show no likelihood of a general Protestant submission to Rome ever being consummated,

afford evidence of religious discontent with Protestant methods.

The question arises, however, why a modern revival of religion need have Catholic implications, and why it cannot go back to the Protestant evangelical position. It will be said that Catholicism is now a thing foreign to the Free Churches of this country and a cause of serious contention in the Church of England, and that any national *rapprochement* to the Catholic conception is for ever impossible; while the evangelical tradition is not dead beyond hope of resuscitation and will provide a sufficient mode for the presentation of orthodox truth without arousing the prejudice which will be stirred by Catholic propaganda.

In reply to this, several considerations may be offered. In the first place, no real spiritual revival ever does renew the precise forms and terms of earlier movements, for the reason that in doing so it would be out of touch with the characteristic requirements of its own age. Evangelical Protestantism did retain the Catholic Christology, which is indeed central and vital, but it forfeited many things without which religion can no longer exert its full power, and for lack of which Protestantism itself is dying. Bunyan and Wesley certainly had the heart of the Christian Faith, but Churches, like men, can die from causes other than heart disease. Protestantism generally failed to emphasize the organic fellowship of Christian men, and its apologists have often treated the Catholic doctrine of the Church as a corruption of pure, spiritual religion. Neither Luther, Cranmer, Calvin, nor Knox preserved the organic conception of salvation which is one of the most conspicuous marks of Catholicism; but Christianity will never again flourish unless the doctrine of the Church as the corporate fellowship outside of which there is no full salvation receives more effective statement than Protestants have given it. In spite of all the strife and bloodshed of our times, it is beyond dispute that the world is witnessing the emergence of a new social consciousness, or is at least discovering its need of such a consciousness.

Man is learning, very painfully, to regard himself as a social being in a sense never previously realized. The organic unity of human life is one of the guiding principles of all that is most morally effective in our age, and therefore our theology, our worship, our prayer, our symbolism must express the social factor. Nothing but the Catholic conception of the Church will suffice.

The experiences of the war, moreover, will cause Christian men to understand the imperative necessity of Christian reunion and to feel that the perpetuation of our divisions is nothing less than a betrayal of the cause of Christ. In the conditions of modern society, when nationalism promises to find its culmination in internationalism and when commerce, science, philosophy, and finance are cosmopolitan, there must be one Church, and one Church only, throughout the world. It may be a Church of rich variety, but its unity must be unassailable. The problems of our day are entirely beyond the competence of sects or denominations even to discuss. In fact, the insulation of Christian communities in denominations or in national Churches is a demonstrated absurdity which must be abolished as quickly as possible. If Christ is to have a distinctive witness amongst the affairs of men, the only possible organ is the Church, One, Holy, and Catholic. But while we assert that no existing Church is adequate to the modern situation, we cannot but admit that Rome, in proclaiming the sin of schism, has borne witness to the true Faith, even though she has thereby condemned herself. Imperfectly enough, it may be, she has yet desiderated this feature of Christianity without which there can be no effective modern revival.

Not only so, but Protestantism gave birth to movements which, not only negatively but also positively, have shown its own insufficiency. The efforts of Liberalism were not all wasted. It aimed at things which need to be achieved, although it had not the power to achieve them. By regarding Jesus as the efflorescence of moral evolution it had attempted to relate Him to the human race in its historical development. We have seen that the attempt

was unsatisfactory, but it has left one permanent contribution of great value. It has caused us to see that Christianity must recognize and sanctify all the basic and constructive factors of human life and must find due place for art, philosophy, music, and for the "natural" expression of the religious instinct. Liberalism showed, too, that the Catholic Faith and practice had elements not unlike some found in non-Christian religions. It attempted to relate these Christian and non-Christian practices and beliefs by ascribing them both alike to the objectification of similar subjective experiences, and we cannot accept this explanation ; but Protestantism officially had nothing to say upon the question, though all considerations of modern culture and the humane instinct press for some satisfying conception of the relation between Christian and non-Christian religion. Evangelical Protestantism would not admit that the "natural" elements have any rightful place in the Church. Its cry is "Jesus only." In other words, it emphasizes the one answer to the religious cravings of mankind which all Christians believe to be the sufficient answer ; but in its practical institutions it gives no expression to the cravings themselves. They are human—and therefore sinful. Natural religion is tabooed ; and the result is that religion has often an unnatural air in Protestant countries. It is because the dominant religious doctrine has discouraged the expression of "natural" religion in the Church's institutions that the way has been opened for the denial of all religious values on the one hand and the treatment of Christianity itself as a mere ethic upon the other. When these results have been produced in Catholic countries, the causes have been different. But if the religion of the average Catholic is more vividly real than that of the average Protestant, the reason is that Catholicism does not seek to abolish the natural forms created by the natural religious instinct, but absorbs and sublimates them. If Christianity is to be the world-religion, this Catholic attitude must be recognized as psychologically correct and spiritually beneficial.

The importance of these considerations will be seen if

we proceed to discuss some of the chief Protestant objections to Catholicism. Professor Harnack complains that Catholicism is a perversion of the Gospel in that it is intellectualist and demands subscription to intellectual formularies as a condition of salvation. It is perfectly true that both the Greek and Roman Churches have made this demand; but the same accusation might justly have been made against almost all Protestant communions, at least until quite recent times. There is nothing specially Catholic about intellectualism. The philosophy of Absolute Idealism, perhaps the purest example of insulated intellectualism in the history of thought, was no Catholic production. And there is nothing essentially intellectualist in the real genius of Catholicism. Rome has had her great mystics and her lovers of men. If St. Dominic was one of her sons, St. Francis was another, and St. Francis was as truly Catholic as was St. Dominic. He was as truly Catholic as Calvin truly was not. Concerning the intellectual formulation of faith and its place within the life of the Church, something will be said in the next chapter. It is freely admitted that Catholic Churches have not always preserved a due sense of proportion with regard to the importance of doctrinal exactitude; but neither have Protestant Churches.

We may therefore leave this objection and pass on to the main Protestant charges. Catholicism is accused of including within its established practices elements which belong to pre-Christian religions which it has absorbed in its contact with pagan cults. Priesthood, the invocation of saints, the use of images and the crucifix, the dramatic ritual of the Mass, incense and vestments, the confessional and penance, are all said to betoken that Catholicism is a natural religion and exhibits the stifling of the pure Gospel in the atmosphere of paganism and superstition. "The natural man," said Rudolf Sohm, "is a born Catholic." Catholicism is looked upon as "playing down" to human weakness, alluring men by sensuous appeal and winning them only upon the plane of their natural depravity. It is said to be acceptable only where men desire to make

the best of both worlds : to substitute pleasant emotions for spiritual reality and the works of self-righteousness for the salvation of God. Finally, it is condemned for giving to human tradition an equality of value with the divine revelation of Holy Scripture. In contrast with all these failings, Protestantism with its discouragement of form and ceremony, its insistence only upon doctrines clearly deducible from Scripture, and its reliance upon the spoken word, is upheld as religion pure and undefiled.

This Protestant attack, however, proceeds from an inadequate psychology and a partial conception of religion. It requires us to make a clean cut between Christianity and all expressions of the natural religious instinct. It requires us to regard all non-Christian religious institutions as having no right of recognition in the Christian Church. It overlooks the fact that the natural man is not only a sinner, but also a religious sinner, and that his religious consciousness, operating through the ages, moulded the forms in which Christ was to be received. Our Lord declared that He had come not to destroy but to fulfil, and if Catholicism has absorbed into itself certain fundamental factors of "natural religion," that does not constitute its shame but its glory. It makes it a religion for all men and for the whole man. Protestant controversialists always find a difficulty in attacking Catholicism for being at once too intellectual and not intellectual enough ; but the fact is that it really strives to relate Christ to mankind—not merely to the theological abstraction of a lost being, but to the whole full-blooded reality, thinking, feeling, wondering, striving, seeking expression by some deep instinct in art and poetry, in ritual, priesthood, and sacrifice.

Is it really adding to the strength of the Christian apologetic to say that it has abolished the need for ritual, priesthood, and sacrifice ? There are some things which refuse to be abolished without disaster. Take the crucial instance of priesthood. The lack of priestly consciousness is one of the cardinal faults of Protestant life and worship. The majority of Protestants scowl at the very name of

priest. Priesthood is regarded as a human intrusion into the divine plan of salvation, the buttress of all that is obscurantist and reactionary, a menace to liberty. And yet it is safe to say that without it no Church could exist, and that even the Free Churches possess it. Priesthood is practically as old and as universal as the operation of the religious instinct. The gay iconoclasts who used to explain that religion was invented by priests always found it tough work to explain how the priests invented priesthood. Mankind, with its shifting moods and its sporadic faith and recurrent disloyalty, craves objective representation, and Catholicism rightly interpreted Christianity as providing the full satisfaction for this craving. It exalts the Christian priesthood, which sanctions the priestly instinct of humanity. Christ is the High-Priest who determines the priestly nature of His Church and by whom every believer is given priestly consecration. The Church is a priestly body whose work is to offer the priestly sacrifice. And if no existing type of Catholicism provides a conception of priesthood which Protestants can accept, that is no reason why Protestants should deny the place of priesthood in the Church. The Catholic Reformation, which might have established a democratic and spiritual conception of priesthood, was thwarted until in the eventual disruption the Reformers attacked the Roman doctrine of priesthood as one of the great perversions of the Faith: but the attempt to abolish priesthood in practice ignored human psychology. The Reformers did indeed give allegiance to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, but they never built the principle into the life and worship of Protestantism, and thus neglected one great means of balancing the dispersive individualism which has been the bane of its existence ever since. For priesthood involves organic unity. If many men can be represented by one man, that man is the symbol of a bond between the many. If the Church is a priestly body, the conception involves faith in the organic unity of the race. In our worship we enter behind the veil for the sake of all the sinful and broken humanity which exists in the

world ; and believing in the organic unity of mankind, we must believe that the race can never become finally derelict so long as there is a priesthood presenting in itself the needs of man before the Throne of God. But the Church's ministry thus becomes a representative priesthood.<sup>1</sup> Each minister is a priest in virtue of his representative function. And while we may readily admit that the Roman conception has done great mischief, we must not forget that Rome, at any rate, has kept the priestly office, showing here, as always, the fuller recognition of the natural operations of religious instinct.

Protestantism has been obsessed with the notion that the natural expressions of the religious instinct must be disregarded. Hence not only has priesthood been practically ignored, but all symbolism of sacrifice has been deliberately abolished. It is held to be sufficient that Christ died once : but then, Christ's death has to be spiritually appropriated before it becomes morally effective, and why that spiritual appropriation should not be symbolically set forth it is difficult to see if we are agreed that symbolism is not essentially an evil thing. Indeed, the case for the sacrifice of the Mass is just as strong as the case for prayer. Christ died for us, but Christ also makes intercession for us. The sacrifice of the Mass relates directly to the sacrifice of Christ. Christian prayer acknowledges the intercession of Christ. Christ died once and He intercedes for ever. If we encourage the practice of prayer, which is the identification of the Church with the one effective Petition, and its appropriation by believers, why should we discourage the Mass, which is the identification of the Church with the one effective Sacrifice and its appropriation by believers ? Prayer, like sacrifice, is a natural expression of man's religious craving ; but Protestantism retains one and distrusts the other, probably because prayer is expressed in words and sacrifice in visible and mobile symbols. It may be objected that our Lord taught us to pray and did not

<sup>1</sup> See Rev. Paul Bull, M.A., *The Sacramental Principle*, pp. 158, 159.

teach us to make ritual sacrifices.<sup>1</sup> That, however, is simply to repeat the mistake of all those who try to base Christianity upon the words of Jesus. Christianity is built not upon His words only, but upon Him. His Sacrifice, the deed itself, has to be estimated and related to man's need. If we may express our faith in His Intercession by the symbolism of words, we may surely express our faith in His Sacrifice by symbolism more appropriate to a deed.

The Catholic practice of appealing to men through their senses, presenting the Gospel in dramatic form, is regarded by Protestants with something like contempt, and is often described in harsh language. What has all this dressing-up, this mummery, this incense-burning, this studied rhythm of phrase and movement, to do with the Gospel preached by Jesus? It is commonly held that these are impedimenta which Christianity accumulated in uncritical ages, but which were rightly abandoned by the reformers of a more discerning period. It is assumed that enlightened minds have no need for these things and that they come between the soul and its Saviour as an interference with pure worship and communion. How much more simple and truly spiritual the unassuming service of Scripture-reading, hymn-singing, and the preached Word! But this criticism of Catholic methods can no longer be sustained upon philosophical or psychological grounds. The belief that the Gospel is expressed in greater purity by a sermon than by a crucifix is grounded in the assumption that language is the only valid vehicle of consciousness. It is not. It does but symbolize according to a given convention of sounds. It is essentially analytical and static in its method. There are whole tracts of experience which it cannot express at all. It is as purely pictorial of reality as any rite or symbol and often sadly less picturesque.

The Catholic act of worship calls into activity all the powers of man. It strives to reach him through every

<sup>1</sup> But this overlooks the implications of Matt. v. 23, 24 and other passages.

channel of his nature. Moreover, Catholicism has displayed a deeper understanding of the psychological need of the worshipper, for in its liturgical forms it seeks his co-operation. It bids him take his part in a gorgeous celebration of a spiritual experience of overwhelming glory and wonder. The precise and practical value of liturgical forms may be seen in the chequered history of the Anglican Church during the past two centuries. Dr. Johnson lived before the Oxford Movement, but he felt the profound spiritual value of a liturgy : and of the Presbyterians he said, " Sir, the Presbyterians have no publick worship : they have no form of prayer in which they know they are to join. They go to hear a man pray, and are to judge whether they will join with him." If it is objected that Catholic worship often degenerates into formalism, the same may be said of Protestant worship ; and it may be added that Protestant worship is more likely to degenerate into formalism, seeing that it confines itself to only one approach to the soul. And of all dreary and soul-paralysing experiences, nothing has yet been invented to compare with a Protestant service which has so degenerated. Formalism is mockery, but Protestant formalism is ugly mockery.

But a due appreciation of the function of forms is not formalism. Catholicism, indeed, openly recognizes that it is impossible for the soul always to be on the mountaintops of spiritual experience, and has provided a routine of practice which is of enormous disciplinary value and helps to save religion from being at the mercy of moods. Protestantism has suffered greatly in effect, because it has never candidly admitted certain plain facts about human nature, even regenerate human nature. Its glowing outbursts of spiritual joy have never received adequate symbolic expression and have thus lacked a great aid to their propagation. Its periods of barrenness and bewilderment have been counteracted by no sufficient ordered practice of devotion, and have therefore been unduly perpetuated. So long as the Salvation Army retains its red jersey it will bear up through many a time of anxiety

and weakness. And if Methodism had retained the class-meeting with its routine, Methodism would be better off to-day.

But perhaps the most vigorous attacks upon Catholicism are made upon the ground that it requires the dependence of the believer not only upon Christ, but also upon the Church; that it unwarrantably mediates the influence of Christ through its saints and sacraments; that in the confessional it interposes between God and the soul a third party who has no spiritual right to intrude; and finally, that it gives to tradition an authority almost, if not quite, equal to that of Holy Scripture. We group these various points of indictment together because they all arise from failure to understand that whereas Protestantism is essentially individualistic, Catholicism is essentially corporate and organic. According to the Catholic conception, a man is saved only when he is integrated into the organic life of the Catholic society. Salvation is not accomplished unless the man is incorporated in the Body of Christ. He cannot settle his account with God in isolation from the Church, for his relation with the ideal fellowship is part of his account with God: and the Church is intended to be the ideal fellowship. Christ and the Church are not separable entities. They are analytically distinguishable, but neither is to be apprehended in abstraction from the other. The Church is the Body of Christ, the unique historical effect of Christ's Incarnation. To found the Church, to inaugurate this new society, was the supreme object of Christ's coming into the world.

This corporate, organic, social view of Christianity is found to underlie each of the doctrines and practices in the group we are now discussing. To say that the believer depends upon the Church as well as upon Christ is simply to indicate the inherently social character of salvation. To speak of Christ's influence being mediated through saints and sacraments is only another way of asserting that the Church is the Body of Christ, and that she has that complex specialization of function which must

characterize a body which is the instrument of personality. Likewise the confessional presupposes that sin is not only dereliction from God. It is a breach of that human fellowship for which man was created and which is realized in Christ. It demands that those who rend and disfigure the Body shall make redress to the Body. It preserves the fact that man's sin is sin against man. The absolution of the Church is the joint forgiveness of God and man. The same fundamental principle explains the place of tradition and authority. If salvation sealed each person in a vacuum there could be no authority and no tradition, except what the individual discovered in his own conscience and memory. But if salvation is incorporation into the redeemed society, the individual both receives and helps to create the authority and tradition of the Church. His experience becomes pooled in the common stock. At a certain period the Church produced the New Testament as the expression of her common life; but as the Church is a living organism she cannot refuse to pay heed to subsequent expressions, so long as they do not contradict or neutralize her central dogmas. She cannot fail to regard those corporate memories which signalize her identity through the ages. Democracy does not necessarily involve contempt for traditions. Just as the subjective exaggerations of the individual are checked and counterbalanced in the society, so also may the unwise emphasis of one age be rectified in the democratic interest by reference to the long experience of the past. As Mr. Chesterton has somewhere remarked, the acceptance of tradition is the enfranchisement of the dead; but it is not therefore the apotheosis of the dead.

It is quite beside the mark to object to this ultimate Catholic conception as repressive of individuality. Its Roman, Greek, or Anglican embodiment may be imperfect. It may have suffered from unwarranted accretions. But unquestionably it is here that we find the most fundamental issue between Catholicism and Protestantism, and it is not likely that the individualistic Protestant view will exert any increasing influence in

an age which is becoming ever more aware of the inherently social nature of human existence. The Catholic Churches, moreover, have produced personality. They have sent forth evangelists and missionaries with prophetic power. They have nurtured saints of most diverse temperaments and attainments. It is an absurd notion that Catholicism recognizes only one type of saint. Stained-glass windows may exhibit only one type; but he would be a super-human psychologist who could show the identity of personal type in St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Augustine, St. Francis, and St. Dominic.

Nor is it less futile to argue that the corporate conception of the Christian life has any essential connection with obscurantism. Whatever the Roman or Greek hierarchy may have done to darken counsel, there was nothing specially Catholic in such action. It was not done in the confidence of the Catholic Faith. Protestant denominations have had their heresy hunts. The persecution of Robertson Smith was not much less obscurantist than the charge against Galileo. But judgments and pronouncements which seem like mere blind prejudice are often the result of wise caution, and Catholicism with its long memory cannot be blamed for being cautious in accepting new philosophies at their own valuation. Had the Church decided, for example, twenty years ago to remodel her creeds in the light of the last words uttered by the current science and philosophy, the Church would now be in a grotesque plight. The work would need to be almost completely revised. Certainly the brand-new formularies of even twenty years ago would by this time appear as antiquated as those which the Church still uses. To the ardent seeker after the latest revelations of science and the most recent opinions of philosophy this caution and reserve may often cause exasperation. But it is justifiable upon the long view, and Catholicism must always take the long view.

Catholicism is thus "the religion for all men and for the whole man." It is in harmony with the modern faith in the organic unity of the race. It emphasizes the im-

portance of historical continuity. It views the individual in his relation with the divine historical fellowship of the Church, and steadily refuses to countenance any breach of that organic comradeship. It ignores all sects. It seeks to mediate Christ through every channel which reaches into the heart and mind and will of man. It does not neglect to address itself to the infra-rational and supra-rational elements in mankind, well knowing that with concrete human nature such appeal is morally valid and spiritually fruitful.

The question will be asked why any one who believes all this about Catholicism finds it possible to remain within the borders of any Protestant denomination. The answer is sincere, and one hopes that it is also clear and definite. Where Catholicism has been preserved, it has been preserved in company with elements alien to the Faith: its vital genius has been confused with non-essentials. Rome and the East are certainly Catholic in that they have preserved the whole integrity of the Faith in its application to the whole concrete man; but they are both encumbered by modes of thought and organization which constitute a counterpoise to their Catholicism, which cannot be deduced from their central dogmas, and which make their Churches as sectarian as Protestantism.

We saw in an earlier chapter that the Protestant Reformation occurred because the Roman Curia failed to effect the reform of certain outrageous malpractices which disturbed the economic and political life of Europe, and because the Curia refused to withdraw impossible political claims which struck at the very roots of the growing national consciousness. Rome could not have effected the necessary reforms without revising the whole scheme of the monarchical government of the Pope which had been developing for centuries. The constant pressure of the Catholic body as it found expression in the Councils of the period was for such a democratic revision; but it was unavailing. Although the Tridentine Reformation really did effect great improvements in many directions,

particularly in suppressing flagrant immoralities, the central vicious principle was carefully maintained. This principle had asserted itself as early as the Cyprianic controversy, and the progress of secular affairs in subsequent times made easy its erection into a doctrine. The Church was always restless under it, and not least resentful when the Curia maintained it with carnal weapons. For long there was threat of rebellion against it, and when the political situation went overwhelmingly against the Pope, the princes and politicians ran away with the democratic forces of Christendom and left Catholicism still in chains.

The monarchical principle of Church government has given a peculiar twist to Roman Catholicism, so that while Rome has often retained good things she has upheld them by bad methods. It has given her an absolutism in doctrine and practice which has left insufficient place for experiment. It has determined her attitude toward all modern movements and has bound her hand and foot to obsolete modes of thought. We have shown that Catholicism must necessarily be cautious in its attitude to the speculations of any particular period; but Rome has adopted a harsh and intransigent attitude which has done nothing for the Catholic cause. She has attempted in later times to dragoon and drill Catholic mentality into one type: a contradiction of the true Catholic principle. It is not surprising that she is accused of having framed her doctrine of transubstantiation with a view to buttressing the political power of the hierarchy. It is not to be wondered at that her absolutism dictates an obscurantist attitude in the modern age. Forced to admit the facts of the historical development of doctrine, she first explained that the apparent development had been nothing more than the gradual publication by the successors of St. Peter of the contents of the deposit of faith originally entrusted to the Apostles. When Newman became a Cardinal, his chief happiness was in the knowledge that it gave him the right to speak, and that even if the Church did not commit herself to his theories she at least recognized them as not heretical. But Newman's theory of develop-

ment, that it was the explication of truths implied in the original dogmas, still left the control of the whole process in the hands of autocratic authority. And when Tyrrell proposed to go further and show that doctrine had developed because it was the conceptual interpretation of spiritual experience, Rome turned him out of doors ; for spiritual experience is a democratic possession and could not be recognized as a check upon Papal pronouncements. The *ecclesia docens* could brook no check from the *ecclesia discens*.

The same cause lies at the root of the Roman attitude to Modernism as distinct from Liberalism. Modernism does aim at preserving the full spiritual values of the Christian Faith by the process of symbolic reinterpretation. If it decides to abandon the metaphysical terminology of the third century, it realizes that it must replace it by symbols of equivalent connotation. But the old theological terms were the special property of the papal government. The new terms would be provided by philosophy and science, which have grown up without the papal sanction. The Roman theory is that not only religion but also theology is mediated to believers through the Bishop of Rome, and the theory was intended to receive its final expression in the Vatican Decrees of 1870. It may yet turn out a providential accident that the papal infallibility was unintentionally not defined in the sense which the friends of absolutism wished ; but even thus the attempt to fasten this last rivet of the system came near to provoking violent disruption, and but for careful manipulation would have done so.

The Roman Church is a marvellous institution and the world owes her many great debts. She is the Mother of all Western Christendom, and even from our Free Church environment some of us look wistfully towards her. But it must never be forgotten that within her pale Catholicism has never been set free from its alien accompaniments, in spite of the Catholic demand which has cried through the ages. She is profoundly undemocratic in her very bones. The Roman Empire passed into her, and she

has broken the hearts of many devoted sons who would have delivered her from its iron dominion. If Protestantism is narrow, unbalanced, without roots, sectarian, the Roman hierarchy is more responsible than any other body in Christendom. If Protestants have severed Christian worship from beauty and the Christian Faith from urbanity, if they have neglected great tracts of Christian experience, the Roman monarchical system must bear a large portion of blame. If the very name of Catholic is anathema to thousands of Christian men, great indeed is the pity of it; but let Rome consider how the Holy Catholic Faith has sometimes fared in her hands.

Nor can we find that Catholicism has come to full and complete self-consciousness in either its Eastern or its Anglican modes. The Anglo-Catholics are but a school within the Church of England, and they are thus committed in practice to the Erastianism of that Church, even when they hate it; and they wage a perpetual controversy with their Anglican opponents upon the question whether the Church of England is Catholic or Protestant. The East, cut off from the main streams of life which flowed westward, has had little intercourse with modern culture and does not understand the modern world. We know that her monasticism has nourished a flame of amazing devotion. We know that there is haunting beauty in her worship. But we cannot forget that she, too, in her own way, has been too often identified with secular policies. In doctrine she has stereotyped the thought of far-distant centuries. She is not greatly troubled by theories of development. Harnack has assailed her upon the ground that she has stifled the pure Gospel in the natural religion which she has absorbed, but we have already called in question the validity of such argument. Much more penetrating is the criticism that while in her early days she could absorb and sublimate so many and diverse elements, in her later periods she has presented a rigid and helpless fixity, and that she has sometimes visited the claims of religious freedom with cruel persecution. And she has not avoided the disastrous

mistake of maintaining the Catholic Faith and the Catholic forms in a sectarian spirit.

Two results emerge from the discussion. The first is, that if Christianity is to become once more a determining influence in the life of the world, it must be expounded according to the great Catholic conceptions of corporate and organic salvation, the unity and continuity of the Church, the recognition in Christian symbolism of the natural religious needs of mankind, and the appeal to the non-rational but morally effective dispositions of concrete personality. Mankind is rapidly making up its mind that individualism is wasteful and destructive; and modern science, philosophy, sociology, and ethics are proclaiming the organic unity of the race. This is not likely to prove a merely temporary phase of thought, for its roots are deep in the historical development. It is for modern Christianity to provide an adequate spiritual basis for this new view of life, otherwise the world's new life will find no escape from barren secularism. We may indeed fall back into an individualistic chaos which may result in the reign of the superman.

The modern age has also made up its mind that its immediate business is with this world, and the only question is whether this world is to be treated as a sacrament of the invisible or as the whole environment of man. If the latter view is taken, it involves the belief that man is a being of only one dimension. By the former view the whole process of life is infinitely enriched. But if Christianity is to display the sacramental significance of the immediate world it will need all the Catholic uses of symbol in its worship, and it will need the high Catholic sacramental notions. Further, our age is in revolt against the tyranny of intellectualism. The revolt may run to indefensible extremes, but there can hardly be any doubt that men intend to live their life in its full-blooded reality and to give play to the joy of life without any lop-sided deference to the dictates of a logic insulated from the heart and will. Christianity therefore can survive only in a full-blooded Church, a Church which recognizes men's bodies, their

passions and instincts, as well as their intellects. The Church must be courageously human as well as divine, and Catholicism has always recognized this, to the great scandal of Puritans. If the new "humanism" becomes thoroughly secularized and divorced from all religion, it must nevertheless seek some method of sublimating itself and may well find it in the poet of Mr. Wells's dream who wrote mystical verses about the profound significance of sexual love.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wells seems to be serenely unconscious that this would be a reversion to ideas which were already exhausted before Christianity first dawned upon the world.

We have seen that no existing Church has made the true application of Catholicism. No existing Church is capable of catholicizing the world, for the reason that in Eastern Orthodoxy, in Romanism, and in Anglicanism the Catholic Faith and practice are in bondage to alien and non-essential elements. Catholicism needs to be delivered from its chains. Its fundamental conceptions whose expression has been hindered or stereotyped need to be set free. Their mobility must be restored. This is the second result reached by our discussion. Catholicism must learn to give representation to the whole life of humanity within the Church, not as it was during one thousand years, but as it has been through all the Church's history and as it is to-day. Ritual and symbolism must never again be considered as finally fixed in form. Theology and doctrine which are explicative and always tentative must never again be proclaimed as though they were of the same intrinsic value as dogma, which is the spontaneous and unanalysed expression of the content of faith. The Church possesses her doctrines and theologies, but is possessed by her dogma; and while she cannot deny the latter without ceasing to be the Church, the former will always need to keep pace with the developing human outlook.

Now, this necessary freedom has been won in Protestantism, and specially in the Liberal school. We have

<sup>1</sup> *The World Set Free*, chap. v.

seen, however, that when won it has so far been used in an ineffectual service. Can this liberty be integrated with the Catholic conceptions? Can the Catholic fullness be maintained in living association with variety and experiment? There seems no intrinsic impossibility in this. It would indeed seem to be the great task of the coming days to synthesize those elements so violently torn apart in the rude analysis of historical conflict. In that analysis we have had the opportunity of learning the vital necessity of both elements; and it is certain that neither alone can preserve Christianity in the future. Unless Catholicism becomes free and opens its eyes to the modern world there will grow up a certain secular Catholicism, if we may so describe it, a certain practical humanitarianism based upon selections and fragments of the Faith which, without having in itself the secret of permanence, may yet cause immense damage to the Church of Christ. But unless religious freedom becomes Catholic it will become increasingly fissiparous, until the Body of Christ is dead and the great Faith which set out to conquer the kingdoms of this world becomes no more than the religiosity of isolated individuals.

## V

### THE NEW FREEDOM

You may say, then, that Catholicity is a quality in the Church that makes for unity. And you may go further. The individual member contributes to the unity of the Church; he can mar it, and he helps to make it. He can partake of the qualities in the Church which make for unity. And Catholicity is such a quality. Therefore Catholicity is a quality in the individual; a man may be called Catholic.

A Christian does not become Catholic; he was not baptized into anything smaller than the organic unity of the Catholic Church. But he may cease to be Catholic; he may develop flaws in his religion that will deprive him of that character; he may fall into schism.—REV. T. A. LACEY, M.A., *Catholicity*.

IT appears from the foregoing chapters that the historical development and the present situation indicate clearly the direction in which the Churches must move if the Christian Faith is to become the energizing principle of all future civilization. A definite task is laid upon all who love the Lord and His Church and yet see the dangers which threaten her. The Protestant upheaval may have been the fully purposed effect of the working of Providence; or it may have been only a second best alternative; or it may have been the direct work of the devil. In either case, it left a practical situation which cannot be indefinitely perpetuated without disastrous consequences. The problem to be solved is nothing less than the reintegration of Catholicism and Freedom. The Churches are now confronted with the task which is becoming the main and central preoccupation of all statesmanship, the task of socializing liberty, of combining individual self-realization with corporate loyalty. In the past the Church has often led the way in dealing with

crucial problems of society. She once gave solidarity to the fluent and chaotic life of Europe, and so made possible the rise of the nations. Political liberty has often followed in the wake of religious liberty. And if the clashing interests and fierce rivalries of free men and nations are to be co-ordinated, if authority and freedom are now to be maintained in organic union, the Church must set an example. Her problem, as we have seen, assumes very definite shape. The vital element of freedom which, having long sought expression, eventually exploded and passed into isolation, has now to be fused with those Catholic elements which seem equally essential to a stable and progressive Church.

It is first of all necessary to consider where may be found the best point of departure for this operation: whether the end will be more easily attained from the side of existing Catholicism or from the side of Protestantism. Will it be easier to commence by making Catholicism free, or by making freedom Catholic? It might seem at first that the more hopeful approach would be from the Catholic side. If Roman, Eastern, and Anglican Catholicism were to become thoroughly democratic, the work would be completed almost at once. The extensiveness of their influence and their great prestige, employed in the service of Free Catholicism, would have a speedy and overwhelming influence upon all Protestant communions. They could incorporate the Free Churches of England and the Protestant Churches of Europe with comparative ease; whereas if those denominations which are really free attempt to catholicize themselves, they are but insignificant in strength and the work in their hands will proceed more slowly.

But we have to recognize facts, and it is certain that existing Catholicism, for various reasons, does not afford much promise. Rome simply does not recognize the place of Protestantism in Christendom, and she has rather stiffened in her intransigence during the past century. She does not recognize that the modern world has any case against her. She spared no pains to crush out the

Modernist Movement. She broke Tyrrell's heart: and that was her final gesture to the passionate and restless longings of the time. What the future holds for Eastern Catholicism is a dark riddle, for the Russian earthquake has made all prophecy impossible. It may be that unexpected winds will sweep through the Church in Russia; but even so, Rome will always be the true mediator between East and West, and our greatest problem still is Rome. The Church of England contains some magnificent democrats who are also fervent Catholics; but that Church as a whole is neither consciously Catholic nor effectually free. She is unsatisfactory, as every *via media* must be. She has to become at once more truly free and more fully Catholic, and the dual task embarrasses her.

On the other hand, the possibility of the Free Churches becoming Catholic in spirit and practice is likely to be regarded by practical people as extremely remote. The very suggestion seems almost fantastic. No Oxford Movement has ever disturbed their consciousness of pure and undefiled Protestantism. They have learned to regard Puritanism as the greatest sign of the Holy Ghost since Pentecost. They have never arrived at any clear interpretation of the Church's nature and function, and some of their recognized spokesmen have described the Church as a man-made institution. Their freedom is often so expressed that the Church is conceived as a voluntary association for religious edification and philanthropic activity, and nothing more. They have indeed cultivated a distrust of any conceptions which would give to the Church a vital significance in the process of human redemption, notwithstanding that from time to time great Free Churchmen have deplored this state of things. They have increasingly tended to schism and subdivision, and it would seem that the smaller the sect the better does it illustrate in its history the infinite divisibility of matter. Methodism has produced at least six denominations in England. Baptists are not all of one sort. And Congregationalists are only now ceasing to be a series of unrelated and exclusive congregations. Besides the greater denominations

there is a labyrinthine confusion of religious specialists, small sects with outlandish names which at least reveal a total lack of the saving sense of humour. Freedom, when it reaches this stage, may not unjustly be called anarchy.

The defective doctrine of the Church makes itself felt in every sphere of Free Church life. Certainly in its architecture, to begin with things visible. There are comparatively very few noble and worshipful edifices belonging to the free denominations of Great Britain ; but there are to be found in every town numbers of buildings which suggest a shabby paganism, and not a few which appear to have been designed by architects in delirium. The typical Free Church interior is not intended to induce the mood of reverence ; for holiness must have no adventitious aids ! A huge rostrum suggests a voice, though not perhaps the still, small voice. The Free Churches have made the sermon the central and dominant feature of their services, and, discarding liturgy as mere formalism, they have condemned the congregation to passivity while one man prays for them in his own phrases and according to his own mood, and preaches to them at such length as they will suffer. The Free Church service is as sincerely intended as any other form, but it often suggests edification rather than worship. In a true Catholicism there must always be room for spontaneous devotion ; but spontaneity does not mean ugliness, and it may coexist with liturgical forms.<sup>1</sup>

The absence of liturgy, vestments, altar, crucifix is no guarantee of spirituality ; and when the preacher's mood is wrong the absence of symbol opens the door to disaster. Symbols may indeed be helpful both to spontaneity and to directness. The ordinary Free Church service, however, is vitiated by the neglect of sound psychology. The worshipper is asked to do nothing. Mr. Squeers knew that to be a false principle in education, and it is a false principle in worship. In the pursuit of unfettered freedom there has arisen the tyranny of the preacher, which lays upon the congregation the heavy

<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 133.

task of unresponsiveness and upon the preacher himself an inhuman responsibility. Even Methodists no longer shout "Hallelujah!" during the sermon. The priesthood of believers is made to consist of listening to the opinions of a man whose priesthood is denied. It is, of course, claimed that the Free Churches possess a prophetic ministry; but the prophets are under the necessity of producing two prophecies at stated hours every Sunday. They come not from the wilderness or the mountain, but from the breakfast-table, or perchance from a restless night in the nursery—as other men have to come. Their prophecies are not usually allowed to exceed half an hour in utterance, but if they occupied no more than five minutes the prophets would be severely criticized. Preaching is a sublime vocation; but the Free Churches have nearly killed it because they have lifted it from its true place and attempted to distort its function. They have nearly killed themselves, too, in the process, for they have made their life depend upon the personal gifts of their ministry. They have demanded the very second-rate grace of popularity. They have given birth to a strange religion of the platform.

It is only natural that in such an atmosphere sacramental faith and practice should languish. If the Free Churches were all of the persuasion of the Society of Friends, their position with regard to sacraments could at least be respected; but their situation is that they have sacraments without quite knowing what to do with them, and the result is that sacraments are too often regarded as unnecessary accompaniments to the true business of prophesying. Added to all this is the painful lack of historical consciousness, of the sense of historical proportion—the lack of the sense of roots—the ephemeral purposes and the ugly narrowness which have characterized and to some extent still characterize the free denominations. They are not yet fully aware of how much truth was told about them by Matthew Arnold. They do not yet know how nearly they have delivered the ark of God into the hands of the Philistines.

Yet if this account were allowed to stand alone, a grave injustice would be perpetrated; for the Free Churches have a noble history, they have produced saints and scholars, they have done much to retain reality in religion. Their witness is indeed of great and unique importance, and they have an extremely valuable contribution to make toward the synthesis which is the hope of the future. In recent years, moreover, there has been noticeable amongst them a tendency to unite upon their common characteristic of freedom, and there is now a disposition to regard denominations not as ends in themselves, but as preserving some element or aspect of religious truth one day to be brought back for the enrichment of the Holy Catholic Church. And while denominationalism is still sufficiently strong to prevent any one definition of the Free Church being applied to all, certain characteristics of freedom may be said to apply to most of the greater denominations of this country.

The first great witness of the Free Churches is to the spirituality of the Church, expressed in their opposition to State control and to any official alliance between Church and State. So long as it could be assumed that Church and State were two arms of the one body of Christendom, the evils arising from the Church's secular ties could not become clearly apparent, although the very assumption that the whole of society is Christian always contains an element of absurdity. In the Middle Ages, as Dr. Figgis has remarked, every one who was a citizen was, *ipso facto*, a member of the Church—the few who were not were “mostly occupied in being burned.” But the whole theory collapsed because it was quite unable to withstand the stress of the historical development and the pressure of plain fact. The Church of England, whatever may be the true philosophy of her establishment (and upon this subject her own divines cannot agree) is, to say the least, in alliance with the official heads of a State which, being at once tolerant in religion and democratic in franchise, is ultimately governed by public opinion or by those irresponsible forces by which public opinion is seduced.

The people of England include millions who know and care about the Church of Christ no more than they know and care about the rites of Mithraism. They neglect her worship and her sacraments, and they are either suspicious or contemptuous in their attitude toward her priesthood. At any moment some critical question may arise upon which Anglican priests will be compelled to defy the law of the land or to be false to their own consciences. To a Free Churchman this position would not offer much difficulty; but to the priests of a Church allied with the State it must necessarily be a situation of much delicacy and anxiety. Upon the question of divorce, for example, some such challenge may be given very soon.

The official alliance is likely to become more impossible in face of the prevalent doctrine of the State. The most enormous menace to human life at the present time is the doctrine of the absolute and all-sufficing secular State, and the exigencies of war with Prussia have made its promulgation easier in countries which have long hated it. All Churches have had during the war considerable experience of the State's assumptions. Ministers have been advised how to conduct public worship, why, when, and for what they ought to pray, and about what they should preach. If the assumption of the ultimate authority of the State is not speedily removed, it is impossible to predict the future condition of the Church, except that she will become a helot in the house of bondage. Nor will the position be improved by the erection of one comprehensive World-State; rather, it may be worsened. The Church has not yet won her age-long fight with the Beast and with Babylon. She needs a revival of the revolutionary spirit which belongs to her essential genius. She needs to make unequivocal confession of the absolute supremacy of Christ. The private approval or tolerance given by her members to the world's standards in commerce and politics is a sufficient betrayal of Christ's Body. The public union between the Church and a State which permits the strong to break the weak, which tolerates blatant wealth and dirty, dismal poverty—the union

between Christ's Church and a State which allows a screaming and mendacious Press to vulgarize the people's soul : a State which is afraid of brewers and financiers—is a scandal and a shame, and a great misfortune for the Church of England.

Her finest sons have dreaded what the State might eventually do to the Church. The Oxford Movement itself was born in such fear. How much stronger is the Church, knowing that the State can do nothing to her ! But the Church of England is unequally yoked, and has constantly to be upon her guard. There is a more excellent way to be learned from the despised Dissenters and Nonconformists, and the whole Church owes a great debt of gratitude to the Free Churches for this gift of freedom from entangling worldly alliances. The Church is better off, being poor and without social prestige and free, than she can be in any sort of union with a secular State, nor does the State suffer. Free Churchmen are amongst the most valuable and devoted public servants in parliamentary and municipal affairs. The Church can exert her full legitimate influence in freedom, and there is no sound moral or spiritual argument for corporate union. The Church needs full liberty of prophesying and unrestricted power to bless and curse. She needs to hold in her hands the right to proclaim that Gospel which can overturn any State which is buttressed by privilege. The nationalizing of Churches has produced the sad and yet ludicrous spectacle of various branches of the Church of Christ engaged in praying desperately for conflicting military ends, each for the triumph of its own nation, each against the national enemies, as if to tribal gods and local baalim.<sup>1</sup> Had the world possessed sufficient time to notice what Christians

<sup>1</sup> This applies to the Free Churches almost as much as to any "State Church." But that is because their freedom is held without Catholic consciousness, and it shows that freedom can attain its full meaning only in Catholicity—only in the consciousness of a Church which is international and world-wide. Until freedom becomes Catholic, Free Churchmen will always be susceptible to the temptation to be English first and Christian second.

were doing, its laughter would have helped to relieve the tragic intensity of the years of war. It is at any rate of profound spiritual necessity that the national Churches be merged in the Church of Christ, One, Holy, and Catholic; not, of course, that they should forfeit their distinguishing national traits for a dead uniformity, but that they should be lifted above an absolute loyalty to any sectional interest and dedicated to the unwavering service of the whole human fellowship. This is one part of the essential witness of the Free Churches of this country.

In the second place, they have entrusted the government and discipline of the Church, under God, to the hands of the whole fellowship of believers, and not to one caste or order or section alone. They know of no rigid distinction between the *ecclesia docens* and the *ecclesia discens* such as would debar the latter from sharing authority and responsibility. Of what is the Body of Christ composed? Are the high levels of saintliness, are prophetic gifts and sacrificial fervour, reserved for the ministerial order? Newman shocked the Roman hierarchy of his time by writing his paper *On Consulting the Laity*, and he was told in effect that the functions of the laity were to provide funds and to entertain. It is safe to assert that if the laity is confined to these functions in future, the day is not far distant when the funds and the entertainment will be to seek. Men will not be content to remain in tutelage to a special order, and the Church of Christ ought never to wish it. The laymen are now seeking greater opportunities of expression and influence in the Church of England, and this in no mere spirit of anti-clericalism. Indeed, the chosen priesthood is surely exalted in so far as the laity consciously recognizes its responsibility in the priestly body.

The Free Churches derive their sanctions in principle from the whole Body of Christ, and they assert that the experience of the entire Church in union with Christ is the basis of authority. It is quite unjust to describe authority so derived as "authority from below," in

contrast with another theory which claims to derive authority "from above." In both theories the authority is believed to be derived from Christ, and the controversy being really concerned only with the validity of the method of derivation, the question is begged at the start by such presumptuous definitions. The Free Churches, indeed, have little to fear in the controversy upon the grounds either of history or of logic. The Roman theory of papal authority is hopelessly incoherent, for it can be supported apparently only by theories which no Romanist would admit. The Pope is above all other bishops, and is the Vicar of Christ; but he cannot be consecrated by his predecessor, who is dead before the election takes place. He is certainly consecrated Bishop of Rome, and thereby receives the apostolic succession which every bishop is believed to receive, but he receives no more than this. The papal succession, as the installation into an office *sui generis*, must be authorized either by the Church, or by the direct power of Christ, or by some uniqueness residing in the See of Rome itself. But Rome does not definitely accept any of these accounts of the papal succession, and it is difficult to find any other coherent explanation; and yet the papal succession is the keystone of the Roman edifice and of all that is meant by authority in her communion.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of apostolic succession, however, is itself far from being securely established upon historical fact. Episcopacy may indeed be the most efficient instrument of ecclesiastical administration; but an elected episcopate would seem more in harmony with the essential genius of the Christian gospel. If truth must be told, there are some estimable Anglo-Catholics who write with fine fury against the unwarrantable assumptions of the papacy, declaring that the monarchical government of the Church is unscriptural and wrong, who seem unaware of the strength of the argument against the oligarchical government of the Church whose people are supposed to

<sup>1</sup> Sparrow Simpson, *The Catholic Conception of the Church*, pp. 233, 234.

possess the glorious liberty of the sons of God. We shall presently see the profound bearing of the Free Church derivation of authority upon the conception of priesthood and sacraments, but it is sufficient here to emphasize this truth, that no other theory really makes the Church a society in which personality is emancipated and its full prerogatives and responsibilities recognized; and if the Church cannot establish human personality in sanctified autonomy, it is hard to understand her mission. Is the Pauline experience of the indwelling Christ the exclusive possession of bishops and deans? Does it not belong also to farmers and weavers and washerwomen? And is it not precisely this experience which constitutes the ground and basis of all the Church's sanctions? Is authority derived from such a basis justly described as "from below"? And, after all, is it not very likely that the Church began with some such conception of the derivation of authority?<sup>1</sup> And is it not certainly true that many great Catholic theologians have entirely repudiated not only monarchical but also oligarchical theories of Church government?<sup>2</sup>

It is easy to point to the risks and even to the failures of the Free Church conception in practice; but the risks which will attend the final rejection of the idea of the Church as a divine democracy will be more hazardous. It is certain that the present weakness of the Free Churches is not to be traced to their democratic forms of government. These are the bulwarks of their existence, and if their laity were to be deprived of influence and power their collapse could hardly be long delayed. And even in their weakness they are wonderful. They present one of the marvellous phenomena of Church history. In the teeth of opposition not only from the fashionable and proud, but also from some genuinely pious elements in

<sup>1</sup> See T. M. Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*, p. 171 *et seq.*, where the evidence of the *Didache*, *Ep. of Clement*, the *Pastor of Hermas*, and other documents is discussed.

<sup>2</sup> Much information concerning the democratic tradition in historic Catholicism is to be found in Gierke's *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, translated by F. W. Maitland.

the national life, having to fight for their rights inch by inch, often enduring heartless caricature and misrepresentation, the free denominations have exerted tremendous influence in Britain and throughout the world, and have become a great fact which any dreamers who long for the reunion of Christendom must seriously contemplate. Their freedom from secular entanglements and their democratic theory of authority are twin secrets which the whole Christian Church must yet learn.

There is another great Free Church affirmation which is supremely valuable for the intellectual and also for the devotional life of the Church: their assertion of freedom for special emphasis upon neglected parts of truth, whether of doctrine or discipline. The Roman Church has sometimes been able to allow extraordinary developments of such special witness: the Franciscan problem, for example, was no small one; but in more recent history Rome has failed to show a similar elasticity. The giants who arose at the birth of Protestantism seem to have made her for ever afraid of giving scope to the inspiration of individuals, and she has long since ceased to give any attention to the task of reconciling strongly individualized testimony with the corporate life of the Church. The Church of England, upon the other hand, although her Articles and her liturgy were intended to make possible a wide inclusiveness, found herself in difficulties at the very commencement of her "reformed" career. Leaving aside her quarrels with Independents and Presbyterians, however, her classic blunder was in her attitude to the Methodist revival.

Let it be understood that the Methodist doctrine of assurance did not necessarily exclude or displace other Catholic elements. Methodism was never mere individualism. The reason of Wesley's criticism of some phases of mysticism was that he was always a good Churchman, possessing a sure instinct of the dangers of subjectivism. He started out as a High Churchman, and in one sense he was never anything else. The Methodists at Oxford were known also as the "Sacramentarians" because of

their regular weekly observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Wesley never left those moorings, and he showed no desire to break from the particular Church in which he had found them. His was not the temperament of the schismatic. He had imbibed too much of the broad culture of Christendom ever to become sectarian in spirit. When the Church of England made his continuance in her communion a moral impossibility, he founded the Methodist Church; but that was not his original purpose. The point here, however, is that the Methodist societies, divorced from the Church of England, were not allowed to become mere loosely knit associations of religious individualists, specializing upon a particular tenet of faith. They became a Church, with sacraments and an ordained ministry. In the class-meetings, specially, there was a social check upon subjectivism. The Church exercised a rigid discipline upon the conduct of its members. And thus it came about that in Methodism, perhaps more than in any dissenting denomination, or even than in the Church of England, the individuals had the consciousness of belonging to the "Body."

Had the Church of England been wise enough to treat Wesley as Rome treated St. Francis or St. Catharine of Siena, how different might have been the religious situation at the present time! Wesley was literally a greater Catholic than any of the Anglican bishops of his day, and for this reason he was driven into the wilderness. The Bishop of London of that period complained in 1739 that the Methodists

had the boldness to preach in the fields and other open places, and by public advertisement to invite the *Rabble* to be their hearers! How big with mischief that practice in particular is may be abundantly seen.

Bishop Gibson was by no means the most extreme of the Anglican opponents of Methodism; but can there be the slightest doubt as to whether he or Wesley had the more Catholic, the more integral, conception of Christianity? Wesley would have remained in the Church

of England had the Church of England allowed it to be morally possible. "Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*," says Dr. Workman, "led Wesley to believe in a Church constituted upon a broad and comprehensive basis, tolerant of different parties within its communion, *including his own societies*."<sup>1</sup> But forced to choose between institutional unity and spiritual reality, he chose the latter. It was not a dilemma which he had ever desired to face, but in his decision he served the deeper Catholic interests. The Church of England rejected Methodism, and had to wait another century for her own revival.

The Church of England has now learned to tolerate considerable variety within her communion, but she has more to learn. There is something wrong with a national Church which can find no room for half the Christian life of the nation, and the fact that such sincere churchmen as Dr. Dale and Hugh Price Hughes lived and died beyond her pale seems to establish the need for Free Churches. But is there any necessity that these denominations should be entirely cut off from Catholicism? Does not the method of exclusion seem to harden their special witness into sectarianism and to force them by reaction into an uncatholic attitude? Is it utterly impossible to conceive that Catholicism might include varieties of administrative system and even varieties of doctrinal emphasis, so long as the fundamental dogma, the central spontaneous expression of faith, were not impugned? Until Catholicism finds the possibility of rich variety in secure unity, the Free Churches will perform an indispensable service. Nevertheless, it must be reiterated that their present position and outlook are far from happy, and while it would be disastrous if their witness were to be lost, it cannot be doubted that they are at present a declining force.

It is perhaps not remarkable that the proposals for Free Church federation or union are put forward mainly upon the argument that the separate denominations are weak. But a Free Church of England which should

<sup>1</sup> *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. p. 15.

contain nothing more than the sum of the present denominations would be no thorough solution of their problems. It might momentarily arrest the rate of decline by producing more efficient organization and by lessening financial burdens; but it would have no more intrinsic meaning and would possess no more vital energy than is found in the separate bodies. A United Free Church obtained by the deletion of all that is distinctive in the denominations would be a singularly vapid achievement.

The determinative question is not how much of its special witness each denomination can be persuaded to abandon. What the Free Churches need to consider is the question of the true object of their special witness. What is it that is to be delivered from worldly alliances? What is it that is to be governed by the Christian democracy? What is it that is to be safeguarded by the emphasis of neglected aspects of Christian truth? Is it a sect, or a sectarian mode of worship, or is it nothing less than the Holy Catholic Church? Does Methodism, for example, exist for the sake of Rome and Canterbury, or merely for its own sake? If the Free Churches can return to these questions only a negative reply, they are convicted of real schism; but if their answer is affirmative, there is at once a great light upon our path. If they exist for the sake of the Holy Catholic Church, there is no valid reason why they should not now seek to develop the Catholic consciousness, to revive Catholic modes of worship, and to emphasize those fundamental Catholic conceptions which we discussed in the previous chapter and which must be presumed to lie in the background of all their activity.

We believe that they are the true representatives of that democratic purpose which never found adequate expression in Rome or the East or in Anglicanism, but which is vital to the welfare of Christendom; but it belongs to the whole Church and cannot find a fit embodiment in sectarianism. The Free Churches have the opportunity of retaining their special witness while at the same time proving their Catholicity. There is no

power on earth which can prevent them from creating the synthesis which is needed, unless it be their own prejudices and a lack of imagination. They are free. They are free to be schismatic or Catholic. The former alternative seems to promise ultimate extinction: the latter is an untrodden road, and to choose it will require courage and faith; but all the history of Christendom seems to point to this as the way of the Church's restoration. The freedom of the Free Churches is a talent entrusted to them by God, not to be buried, but to be used for the blessing of the Church and the world.

In what other way do Free Churchmen propose to meet any possible advances from the side of existing Catholicism, or how do they hope to inspire such advances? They are justified in demanding that Romans and Anglicans shall abate certain claims; but what is it that Free Churchmen themselves are prepared to do? Do they expect Anglicans to burn their prayer-books and Romans to smash their crucifixes in order to conform more nearly to the Free Church type? What we seek to remove from Anglo-Catholicism is surely not one particle of its devotional practice, but the State connection and the oligarchical episcopacy. What we seek to remove from Roman Catholicism is that monarchical principle of government which has vitiated the entire Roman system and is the prime factor in the Roman misinterpretation of the gospel. When the great Catholic conceptions are delivered from such chains and made free, they will be found no longer repugnant to those Free Churchmen who live by love and not by prejudice. They will have lost those features which do not belong to their essential nature and which have long obscured their beauty and their truth. The Catholic conception of the Church, the priesthood, and the sacraments, the Catholic use of symbol, the Catholic practices of devotion, are capable of being reinterpreted in freedom, so that their vital reality shall emerge and their living significance shall be made manifest to the modern world.

We have seen that the fundamental Catholic conception of the Church exhibits the organic nature of human

salvation and the corporate unity of all redeemed life. There is nothing in this conception to destroy either congregational liberty or the vividness of the individual experience, if it be recognized that the organic unity of the Church is not to be sought by harsh and dictatorial methods, but can be truly realized only in freedom. Is it an obscurantist and reactionary doctrine that the Body of Christ is the redeemed society? And if the Church be divorced from secular alliances and emancipated from undemocratic forms of government, is there any menace to political freedom in holding that she is of supernatural origin and has unique relations with the Invisible? Is it a denial of individual liberty to say that to the Church is given the keys of the Kingdom, seeing that humanity is instinctively social and that no man can live his true life apart from fellowship? Is it a denial of the place of Christ our Lord, seeing that He and no other is the Church's Head and His Holy Spirit her life? The most majestic conception of the Church comes home to the affairs of modern men when the Church is conceived in the light of freedom. The world craves for fellowship. The function of the Church is to establish it upon the only sufficient foundation. Religion, above all things, must draw men together.

Catholicism has therefore been intuitively right in propounding a high doctrine of the Church; but existing Catholicism conceives the fellowship in obsolete social terms. True fellowship, true society, must be based upon free and autonomous spiritual life in its members, and cannot exist under authority which is not shared by them. This is no condemnation of the actual Catholic orders. Free Churchmen would have no objection to an episcopate depending upon the suffrages of the Christian society. As a matter of fact, several denominations have their bishops in practice if not in name. And if the bishop is elected and his office thus becomes representative of the Church's powers and prerogatives, there can be no valid objection to episcopal ordination.

Likewise, when priesthood is conceived as representative of the priestly function of the Church, it can have no

obscurantist or autocratic suggestions. That the individuals consecrated to the specialized priestly duties should be in some ways differentiated and set apart need cause no qualms in Free Churchmen, for they do already so differentiate and set apart their ministry for the prophetic office ; and if the Church is conceived as priestly as well as prophetic, the priest will receive his sanction from the whole body. The fundamental distinction between a Roman priest and a Free Church minister is not, from the Free Church point of view, that the former has a more holy office than the latter. It is, indeed, regarded as a different office, but the root distinction is that of the derivation of authority. Retain the Free Church conception and there is nothing which need frighten any one in the word "priest." In fact, the minister who at present is called upon not only to perform rites, but to frame public prayers in sentiments and words of his own choosing, has already a great deal of autocratic power placed in his hands, and the assertion of his representative priesthood would rather humble him than increase his personal pride. But the important thing is that priesthood interpreted by freedom is bound to involve the whole Church in the priestly office. The priestly sacrifice is the solemn task of the Christian fellowship, and it is precisely the priestly consciousness which is needed to elevate and transform the Free Church modes of public worship and to give to the denominations a new organic sense.

So, also, when it is once clearly grasped that when the sacraments are interpreted in free fellowship they lose all connection with mechanical or magical ideas, there remains no reason why the Free Churches should not proclaim the high sacramental gospel. What objection can there be to seven or to seventy sacraments, provided it is remembered that they are not magical or mechanical in their operation, but the means of a fellowship which is rooted in the unseen? It is quite clear that the higher the sacramental doctrine, the more effective becomes the sacrament as a social instrument. The validity of a sacrament depends upon the reality of

the fellowship. It is not the reality of the fellowship which depends upon the validity of the sacrament. It is the union with Christ and the brethren in Holy Communion which is the guarantee of that sacrament; but the more one sees this, the greater value will he assign to sacramental observance. Holy Baptism does not, in the narrow sense, directly deliver a dying infant from the flames of hell; but, socially interpreted, Holy Baptism delivers mankind from hell. It is the recognition of the fact that the infant is born into the race for which Christ died. It is a declaration of the significance of the Church for all human nature. It is indeed the outward visible sign of an inward spiritual and social grace, and the more the Church makes of it, the better for every one. Even the confessional becomes acceptable when it is optional, and when it is regarded as confession to Christ and the fellowship as an inseparable spiritual organism. If the confessor has no arbitrary power, but possesses only the authority which is representative of the Church, his work is necessary and its effects must be salutary. In such an atmosphere of freedom, confession would become a terribly real test of sincerity; and, indeed, it is likely that hundreds of Free Church ministers do from time to time so act as confessors. But the confessional needs to be recognized and proclaimed as a valid means of grace in the community of Christian men.

It is certain, however, that with the best will in the world the synthesis of Catholicism and freedom cannot be accomplished without the general adoption of a new attitude towards creeds and doctrinal professions. It cannot be affirmed that the Free Churches have clearly and fully witnessed for freedom from doctrinal tests, for they have had their theological wrangles and their heresy hunts; and though there is now little of the old sectarian rivalry amongst them, it must not be forgotten that in spite of common catechisms they present varieties of theological formulation. Some, for example, are Calvinistic in basis. This, however, is not to be regretted, for if they ever become catholicized in their variety they will set a luminous example.

It may seem to some readers that theological variety is utterly inconsistent with genuine Catholicism, and that a Catholicism which should include orders of Baptists and Friends would be simply farcical. But the whole pressure and tendency of life and thought is making for a solution of the credal problem, and the process of symbolical reinterpretation is rapidly diminishing the difficulty. If a wide acceptance be won for the distinction between *dogma* as the spontaneous utterance of faith and *doctrine* as the reflective explication of dogma in terms of current philosophy, it is obvious that the worst bitterness will be extracted from many a hoary controversy. The fundamental dogmatic basis of a Church at once Catholic and Free might be very simple and at the same time very searching, and yet allow considerable variety of theological interpretation; and if it were still found necessary to formulate official doctrine, its secondary and derivative importance would have to be understood. If the devotional life of the Church is pure and strong, if her absolute moral and spiritual loyalty to Christ is steadfast, there is little danger of any permanent misinterpretation of her experience in doctrinal terms, no matter what degree of freedom is allowed; and it cannot be too strongly urged that there is never any possibility of an adequate expression of her full experience in those terms. The nearest approach to an adequate expression of spiritual experience in words is to be found in dogma as here understood, and the place assigned to dogma makes it clear that what is proposed is not any theological liberalism which should reduce the Christian values. It might be well, as Tyrrell suggested, to retain the creeds as classical expressions of the human mind in reflection upon the great facts of the experience of salvation; but in a Free Catholic Church they could not be applied as tests. They might be used as canticles.

Upon such a dogmatic basis a very large amount of agreement will eventually be possible. Moreover, the achievement of Church unity upon such grounds would exert an enormous influence upon the modern world, which regards our doctrinal disputes with contempt. A

Church thus constituted in Catholicity and Freedom would be capable of bringing together a great diversity of opinion and practice even in single congregations.

The freedom of the Free Churches seems a providential instrument for the introduction of such a movement of synthesis and reintegration. We have to consider that any approach of the free denominations toward Catholicism in spirit and devotional practice, though its effect might become only slowly apparent, would eventually compel a change of attitude in existing Catholic Churches. A Congregational Church with a priest and a liturgy, an altar and a crucifix, a genuine dogma and a genuine friendliness towards the Catholic type, but possessing a true freedom and offering a welcome to all who love the Lord Jesus, compelling none, and yet including many varieties of intellectual attitude amongst its membership, would be a challenge such as Rome, for instance, has never been called upon to face. A Methodism which declared itself the servant of the Holy Catholic Church, and gave visible proof that its devotional life was one with that of St. Augustine and St. Francis, would touch unsuspected chords in the heart of Catholicism. The present embodiments of Catholicism maintain themselves in this age, in spite of considerable obscurantism and intransigentism, because of their adherence to those fundamental Catholic conceptions which we have discussed: because it is actually felt by many men of informed mind and democratic instinct that to abandon these, even in their present restricted application, for the sake of greater liberty of personal thought and action, would be only a doubtful gain. But if Rome were to be confronted by a Church which confessed the Catholic Faith and practised the Catholic methods, while at the same time possessing the spirit of liberty, she would quickly discover her loss of a whole armoury of controversial weapons.

It is, of course, not possible or even advisable that an attempt should be made suddenly to commit the Free Churches to the whole range of Catholic thought and method. Even supposing they were to witness a surprising Catholic revival in their midst, room must

always be found for those Free Churchmen who have an innate dislike for rites and liturgies, or who object to insistence upon sacramental observance.<sup>1</sup> The first necessity is that in the Free Churches there shall be engendered a strong Church consciousness and a Catholicity of spirit. This would almost certainly be followed by a new appreciation of Catholic forms. For this purpose it is not necessary that the denominations shall commit suicide; but it is necessary that they shall be taught to think of themselves as orders in the Church of Christ. And where ministers and congregations are so minded, experiments may be made in a spirit of loving enterprise to discover how much of the devotional practice of the great Catholic tradition may be incorporated with their denominational traditions. It is true that prejudices die hard, but it should not be difficult to convince people nowadays that symbolic beauty is of high religious value: that worship, being a priestly office, should be accompanied by reverent rites: that an altar is not necessarily pagan or a crucifix an idol: that if the Church has a sublime and holy significance it ought to be made visible in her characteristic acts. The reply will sometimes be made that all this is very dangerous and will tend to smother the pure simplicity of the Gospel and lead to mere ritualism without genuine religion. Enough has already been said upon this subject, but it may be remarked that those who use this argument are in the position of one who should say, "Some people live for clothes: let us therefore dispense with clothes."

<sup>1</sup> "We therefore affirm the reality of personal conscious communion with God and *would foster the mystical development of the soul*. This inward and individual evangelical experience is a precious, intimate, and vital thing, the importance of which we cannot overlook or depreciate. There is in truth no full and sincere Christian life apart from this. . . . *We uphold the sacrificial significance of worship*, whether it be simple or elaborate. For in all true worship we offer and present ourselves, our bodies, souls, and spirits as a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice in the spirit of Him who made the supreme sacrifice for us. But to insist one-sidedly on either the ordered or the spontaneous expression of religion is to fall into error, eccentricity, and extravagance."—Rev. J. M. LLOYD THOMAS, *The Free Catholic*, vol. iii. pp. 50, 51.

There are already some signs that a new feeling for Catholicism is arising within the Free Churches. They are coming to a mood of receptivity. They are seeking for possible modes of union amongst themselves and for opportunities of co-operation with the Church of England and even with Roman Catholics. The growing use of liturgies is evidence of a new spirit, of a new conception of worship. Even the dress of their ministers is becoming more clerical every year: not, one may suppose, from any absurd assumptions of a caste, but from a genuine feeling that the Church is not of this world in her origin and end, and must have her patent social signs of differentiation from the world. In Mr. Chesterton's play, *Magic*, some one asks a clergyman why he "dresses up like that" if he does not believe in the supernatural. That is exactly the point. Some Free Churchmen make use of Catholic methods in their private devotions, and it would cause no little surprise if it could be known how many a "manse" contains a crucifix. It is not long since a certain Free Church minister astonished the congregation at a united service held by the Free Church Council of his town, by devoutly crossing himself before he went into the pulpit to preach the sermon. The Free Catholic movement is a sign of the times in that its genesis was amongst Free Churchmen; but it also affords evidence that approaches toward Catholicity upon the part of Free Churchmen may awaken sympathetic interest in Catholic communions, for it has attracted Anglican priests, and has even received sympathetic notice from some Roman Catholics.

Doubtless there are many difficult tasks to be undertaken before the Free Churches can be catholicized in their freedom; but it is idle to pretend that they have experienced no change of sentiment and perspective in recent years: idle to pretend that there is no seeking for a more positive standpoint than that implied in the words "dissent" and "nonconformity." There is less smug self-satisfaction in isolation and petty peculiarity and an increasing vision of the glorious destiny of the Church of Christ. Amidst the gigantic commotion of

our times, Christian men are beginning to perceive the wretched folly of division, and Free Churchmen are now so closely in contact with modern culture and modern world politics that they can hardly escape the conviction that the reunion of Christendom is the world's prime necessity.

Is a Free Churchman necessarily disloyal to his own communion if he looks with wistful eyes toward the majestic order of Rome—that Church in which speak the voices of so many ages, into which has been poured so much of human love, and whose every gesture is saturated with priceless memory? In spite of all her defects, there is an undying fascination in the Roman Church. Or is this Free Churchman a renegade if his soul loves the stately graces of the Anglican Church at her best, or if he sometimes hungers for the haunting, reverential beauty of the Church of the East? May he not recognize that Catholicism has given birth to passionate revivals and has inspired missionaries in the darkest corners of heathendom? Must he blind himself to all the social dynamic which lies in the Catholic conceptions, and which now waits to be utilized by the freedom which he can bring? May he not combine loyalty to his own communion with the feelings of one who is exiled in a just cause? May he not desire with eagerness and fervour, and pray, sometimes with scalding tears, that at last by the mercy of God there may be vouchsafed to sinful men the sign of the Holy Catholic Church of Christ renewed in freedom, gathering to her bosom many who are now strangers and foes? And may he not desperately hope that the Free Churches may be so blessed as to learn that Freedom in Catholicity is a better way than cold indifference or vulgarizing strife and rivalry?

Some of us love the denominations in which we were born, and baptized, and reared. In their soil our hearts have their roots and in their communion and service we find great joy. We delight in the fellowship of their people and we are proud of their traditions and achievements. But we believe that there is one holy work which they have yet to do. They have to make their contribution toward the healing of the broken Body of Christ.

## VI

### THE BODY OF CHRIST

We want, it is said, a Church of God, and not one of Man. Yes, that is our want, the want of us Englishmen, the want of people everywhere. We have believed, whatever we may have talked to the contrary, in a Church built on some human foundation, resting on some human authority, supported by some name or notion. And it will not do. We feel it will not. We find that there is no peace for us while we are trying to stand on this ground, no peace with each other, no peace in our own consciences. We must have a Church resting in the name of God and in no other.—  
FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE.

IN view of the tragedies and failures recorded by Church history, and from experience of the narrowness and spiritual poverty which the Church from time to time exhibits, the opinion is often expressed that Christianity would have a better chance in the world without any ecclesiastical organization, and that "organized Christianity" is a mistake. The defection of huge masses of the modern population is looked upon as threatening the extinction of all existing Churches at no very distant date, while the rapid secularization of life seems to foreshadow the developments which Comte expected. There is no sufficient understanding of the social significance of the visible Church. It is rather fashionable to regard her as the enemy of society, and many who believe that Christ is the Saviour of men and the hope of society yet see no need for the Church. The Liberalism of the nineteenth century offered strong support for this view, and we have seen how it attempted to reconstruct the Faith in such a fashion as to leave no essential meaning in the Church's ordinances. At the present time there is a great

public which believes that in future the Christian religion will be practised without being preached, and will find its only sacraments in the home, the mill, and the forge.

It is very necessary to point out that those who look for such an anti-climax to all history are neglecting some features of the past century which, if not so obtrusive as those we have just named, are nevertheless more fraught with the promise of future influence. The Oxford Movement took its rise eighty years ago. It is by no means played out, and its importance seems to grow as the years pass. It was a portent. Coming at the moment when Industrialism and Positivism and Liberalism were getting into their stride, it really signalized the first stirrings of the Catholic idea reawakening in the Protestant world. It was the first sign of discontent with negation and division. It was the beginning of the renewal of that conception of the Church which was the foundation of Christendom. It had a romantic history. Suspected and reviled by enemies in various communions and in none, eventually abandoned by several of its most brilliant leaders, thrust out from its birthplace, it yet lived on in slum parishes and country villages until at length it began to capture the cathedrals and to prove that it had come to save the Church of Christ in England. An exclusive Anglican movement, in many respects limited in scope and narrow in outlook, it nevertheless heralded the fact that the revival of Christianity in the modern world must come by way of a revival of the Church. Its leaders were not conscious of half the implications of their movement, but they did cling to the belief that the Church is the divinely given instrument of Christ in the world. They were aware of some of the grave dangers which threatened her, and they believed that the Christian Faith was therefore threatened.

It is sometimes suggested that had there been in this country any adequate acquaintance with the progress of German philosophy and criticism, the Oxford Movement would never have been initiated, the idea being that the movement was only possible as the

outcome of uninstructed mediævalism. There could be no greater error. Pusey himself was intimately acquainted with what was going on in Germany, for he had spent years in daily association with German Universities and had made a systematic study of current German thought. If he at first attempted to defend the Germans from the charge of undermining the Church and the Faith, his later reflections upon the subject led him to devote his life to the movement which was to combat the German influence. The Anglo-Catholics have been charged with obscurantism as dark and rigid as that of Rome, and the charge is not entirely without foundation. Nevertheless, they have performed a service to Christendom which will rank amongst the great deeds done for the Faith. Admitting their limitations, admitting their frequently mistaken tactics, it yet remains true that in a period when the forces of the world seemed about to sweep the Church out of existence, they upheld the sanctity, the dignity and the authority of the Church, and gave to their own communion a new consciousness and a new orientation. And they inaugurated the epoch of reconstruction.

We have said that it is still expected by some that the Church is doomed to extinction ; but these have not noticed the signs within the Church herself. There is, of course, much confusion and contradiction of counsel amongst her spokesmen, but there is evidence that in the hour of her weakness and ineffectiveness she is awakening to a revived sense of her divine commission. The Free Churches of England, where there has been most distraction and paralysis, are beginning to develop a Church-consciousness which they have never previously possessed ; and in most communions men and women are praying with fervour for the coming of the Holy Catholic Church. In some places, however, there is considerable fear that this movement is reactionary, a sign of decadence, a further proof that the long day is drawing to a close and that the Church's energies are exhausted ; and it must be shown that such fears are groundless. They proceed

partly from false historical analogies, but generally from the failure to see that the Church is the organism without which the Christian Faith is deprived of meaning, emasculated, and made ineffective either for spiritual life or social service.

So far from the uprising of Church-consciousness being a sign of decadence, when it has operated it has produced regeneration and power of the highest order. There is a self-consciousness which is morbid ; but there is also a lack of self-consciousness which is pathological. The Church of England in 1830 had no self-consciousness and she was in a state of coma. The free denominations are just now showing signs of a revival from a similar condition, and they are experiencing what the Oxford Movement helped the Church of England to experience : an awakening to a knowledge of their place and function in the Body of Christ. It cannot be maintained that the Oxford Movement has not brought strength to the English Church, for without its inspiration she would probably have dissolved before the close of the nineteenth century ; and if the Free Churches are now receiving a like impetus, they too may be delivered from death. The life of the Church in the coming days will depend upon how clearly she can show herself to be the sacramental type of social life : the incorporation of humanity into God ; the very Body of Christ. The period of philosophical, political, and social analysis in which a divided Church, unconscious of her deepest nature, could survive, is coming to an end. The cataclysm of the world war is its terrific consummation. Men's thoughts in all spheres of life are turning toward construction and synthesis, and the Church must make her affirmation of a positive consciousness or perish.

The nature of the situation which was yet to develop was seen with wonderful insight by one whose name has long since passed from popular knowledge, but from whom Pusey and his friends learned some of their first principles. Dr. Sikes of Guilsborough was one of the forerunners of the Oxford Movement, and Pusey records one of his conversations which bears so remarkable a

relation with all that has since happened that it is worth quoting at some length :—

I seem to think that I can tell you something which you who are young may probably live to see, but which I, who shall soon be called off the stage, shall not. Where ever I go all about the country I see amongst the clergy a number of very amiable and estimable men, many of them much in earnest and wishing to do good. But I have observed one universal want in their teaching : the uniform suppression of one great truth. There is no account given anywhere, so far as I see, of the Holy Catholic Church. I think that the causes of this suppression have been mainly two. The Church has been kept out of sight, partly in consequence of the civil establishment of the branch of it which is in this country, and partly out of false charity to Dissent. Now, this great truth is an article of the Creed ; and if so, to teach the rest of the Creed to its exclusion must be to destroy : the analogy and proportion of the faith.' This cannot be done without the most serious consequences. The doctrine is of the last importance and the principles it involves of immense power ; and some day, not far distant, it will judiciously have its reprisals. And whereas the other articles of the Creed seem now to have thrown it into the shade, it will seem, when it is brought forward, to swallow up the rest. We now hear not a breath about the Church ; by and by those who live to see it will hear of nothing else ; and just in proportion perhaps to its present suppression will be its future development. Our confusion nowadays is chiefly owing to the want of it ; and there will be yet more confusion attending its revival. The effects of it I even dread to contemplate, especially if it come suddenly. And woe betide those, whoever they are, who shall in the course of Providence have to bring it forward. . . . They will be endlessly misunderstood and misinterpreted. There will be one great outcry of ' Popery ' from one end of the country to the other. It will be thrust upon minds unprepared and on an uncatechized Church. Some will take it up and admire it as a beautiful picture, others will be frightened and run away and reject it ; and all will want a guidance which one hardly knows where they shall find.<sup>1</sup>

These words were uttered by " the good Mr. Sikes," as Pusey calls him, in the year 1833, and we are only now coming to realize all their prophetic meaning. The Oxford Movement was but the beginning of their fulfilment. The great and pressing need is for the promulgation in every communion of a high doctrine of the Church as an

<sup>1</sup> Liddon's *Life of E. B. Pusey*, vol. i. pp. 257, 258.

integral element of the Christian religion, and the Church's consciousness of this need is waxing and not waning. But unless we are prepared to see the absorption of all sects into one, we must look for the Free Catholic synthesis. The dangers of misunderstanding are great even in these days. There are thousands who imagine that anything which Rome thinks or does is necessarily hateful and dangerous. There are many Protestants who will maintain that the acceptance of fundamental Catholicism involves the surrender of their own most valued privileges. Roman Catholics will be taught that any doctrine of the Church which admits contributions from Protestants emanates from the father of lies. Against these assaults, those who believe that the only adequate conception of the Church must be found in the synthesis of Catholicity and Freedom can say nothing, but only pray that the thoughts of men may grow wider and their hearts more charitable.

But there are the others who will declare that the attempt to achieve this synthesis is both hopeless and needless, since the Church idea is now exhausted and destined to have no further influence amongst men. These will grow eloquent about the Church of Humanity. To them we shall reply that the Church of Humanity is precisely what we are seeking, but that it is futile to seek a Church or any other enduring bond amongst men which does not derive from supernatural sources ; and further, that Christ certainly aimed at nothing less than the Church of Humanity, and that if He Himself is proved to be the securest bond between men, the Church built in His name must be as His Body, a society cohering around and embodying Him.

With all those who yearn for a deeper and truer social order amongst men, we believe that salvation is much more than the setting of an individual in a new relation with God, and that it is the unification of all his activities upon the plane of love. It involves a society ; but since that redeemed society must draw its sanctions and its strength directly from the invisible, it cannot neglect the priestly office of worship. Nor can worship itself

ever be completely satisfying in isolation, for the act of worship must involve the worshipper's whole being, and therefore must include the social import of his personality. Worship must have its public and social occasions or its full meaning will not appear. The worshipping society, moreover, must definitely seek to take on the characteristics of its unseen principle, and live by virtue of that supernatural life, so that it is bound to express itself as a differentiated entity in the world.

There is no description of the Christian Church which so places her at the very centre of significance in history and in the modern world as do the words of St. Paul, "Ye are the body of Christ." When the Church forgets this she is weak. When she remembers it she is strong, no matter how much appearances may be against her. By applying this thought of the Church as the Body of Christ we may gain some most illuminating and constructive conceptions of her true nature and function, and a criterion whereby to judge the various schemes and proposals put forward concerning her; for there are certain characteristics of a body which all the present sects and denominations of Christendom need constantly to remember.<sup>1</sup>

In the first place, a body is distinct. It is a collocation of material atoms which have been separated from all other material substance in the Universe and animated by an individualized life. So the redeemed society ought naturally to be distinct. Ever since the days of Constantine—indeed, ever since her first experiences in the Roman civilization—the Christian Church has had to wrestle with the task of preserving her distinctness from the world, which is only to say that she has been struggling to keep alive. For obviously the reabsorption of a body's substance into the mass of other matter is the very definition of a body's death.

Now, this necessity of separation from the world has given occasion to false emphasis, misinterpretation, exaggeration, and a host of gloomy or fantastic follies

<sup>1</sup> See F. J. A. Hort, D.D., *The Christian Ecclesia*. chap. ix.

which have not been confined to any particular type of churchmanship. Roman Trappists, Puritans in their sourest moods, Evangelicals in their denunciation of kindly and harmless pleasures, the Oxford Movement in its doctrinal harshness and exclusiveness, have all felt the need for the Church to exhibit a marked contrast with the world; but it is quite obvious that the contrast can never amount to absolute unlikeness and contradiction. After all, a body is still in one sense a part of the one material universe, and would otherwise lose all its meaning. The Church must preserve a contact with the common intuitions and the healthy natural habits of men. She must not contradict human nature as such, but must rather exhibit human nature ennobled by new spiritual forces. Thus, no matter how necessary extreme asceticism may sometimes be—and perhaps the ascetic by vocation will always be necessary—the distinctness of the Church from the world cannot primarily consist in the abstention of Christians from all secular pursuits and culture. The Body of Christ must always be seeking to incorporate within itself all the energies of mankind.

The distinctness of the Christian Church is denoted in the Christian claim that all the normal and healthful exercise of human powers can be successfully maintained only in coherence with Christ. The Church has therefore to exhibit Christ operating as the true life-principle of personality and society; and this is precisely her ground of conflict with the world. It is upon this point the Church fails when her members admit the world's contention that there are great tracts of life over which Christ can exert no sway: when professedly Christian men practise the Christian uses of worship but the worldly uses of commerce and politics, and accept the worldly standards of personal worth and social success. The distinctness of the Body of Christ is not merely that it lacks something which the world has, but that it possesses something which the world has not. It is positive, not negative. And the Catholic conception of the sanctification of body as well as soul in worship is the fitting

representation of the truth that the redeemed society has to prove to the unredeemed society that commerce, art, science, and politics are not activities to be avoided by those who desire to flee from the wrath to come, but that they may be infused by the Holy Spirit of Christ and become channels of divine life.

This, however, cannot be thoroughly accomplished by a Church which has officially entered into worldly alliances, or by a Church which ignores the practical worldliness of her members, or by a Church which seeks to recommend herself by truckling to the passing fashions and demands of the moment. In all her visible and characteristic symbols, the Church must have the courage to be herself. However wide and world-embracing may be her sacramental significance, the Church must always maintain her distinctive signs. Even her architecture becomes meaningless unless it is definitely ecclesiastical, and her services are worthless unless they are worshipful. But these things are sacramental, and their value is that they shall be a means of grace to the whole of life: that because a church has a spire pointing towards heaven, every house should have a bathroom and a proper drainage: that because men go to church to pray, they should go to their shops and offices to serve and not to swindle; and that because they offer the Sacrifice at the altar there should be abundance of songs and laughter in the earth.

A body is not only distinct. It is the symbol and the instrument of personality. The thoughts and purposes of a man's heart engrave themselves upon his brow and report themselves in his gestures. It doubtless is a great miracle that so much material tissue can become a human face shining with love and reflecting divine grace, or darkened by clouds of passion and registering the motives of hell; but it is a miracle to be seen a thousand times repeated every hour. Personality is capable of giving its own hall-mark to the material substance in which it is incarnate, so that by the glance of an eye or by the movement of a hand we may read the secrets of a soul. Even a man's clothing receives the stamp of his personality.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the Church is in the world not to recommend a theory but to embody a Person. She is not here merely to expound that Person's teaching or to discuss His psychology. She does not bear to Christ the relation which the Browning Society bears to Robert Browning. She is like nothing else on earth: she is the perpetual Incarnation. Being what she is, a body, an instrument and symbol of personality, her emblems and visible tokens should naturally signalize the One Person whose embodiment she is. There should be in her appearance a certain logic and ethic of symbol. A rostrum, for example, facing an auditorium is not specially symbolic of Christ. A table with a vase of flowers upon it is not specially symbolic of communion with the crucified Saviour. A brick tower culminating in a stone pineapple is not specially symbolic of the Christian ethos of devotion. It was a right and healthy instinct which led men to place a cross upon the altar and a crucifix above the pulpit. A personal body will have its distinguishing features and its distinctive clothing, and will maintain their distinctiveness through all changes of tissue; and these things symbolize that the Church is Christ's and not another's.

But there is more to be said. Such symbols express and help to maintain the personal identity of the body, and all living bodies possess them. Yet it is possible for a body to be dead before such outward marks of personality are entirely obliterated. A living body not only possesses the signs, but continues to transmit through them the fire and force of the indwelling and controlling spirit, and becomes increasingly the vehicle of personal influence. How, then, shall the Church be truly the Body of Christ if she does not convey His very Personality through the medium of her visible signs? If her government is autocratic, men may well fail to discern the features of One who said, "I call you not servants but friends." If she is allied with the powers and privileges of this world, they may miss the accents which declared, "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." If she is harsh and

exclusive in demeanour, applying rigid credal tests or censuring without sympathy the failures of men, they may not behold the gentle gesture whereby He announced forgiveness to a daughter of shame on the ground that "she loved much."

When Christian men realize that the Church is the bodily instrument of Jesus Christ they will see that she can never be constituted as a political organization. She is not an organization, but an organism. She exists not merely to attain an object or to conduct a propaganda, but to embody a Person. She cannot mould herself upon any earthly pattern of society because she is the incarnation of a new, redeeming force, of an irruption from the unseen. Likewise she cannot exist as a circle of acquaintance and mild intercourse between people of the same social grade. She exists to display the countenance of Christ, sometimes stern with anger against Pharisees, sometimes weeping at the sight of the shepherdless multitudes, sometimes benign amongst the children and the lilies, and sometimes covered with the bloody sweat of agony. She is come not only to invite the weary to rest, but also to cast out devils and to send fire on the earth. She has a cup to drink and a baptism wherewith to be baptized.

A body is not only distinct and personal. It is one. It is sometimes suggested that the analogy of the tree or the vine is in some respects more appropriate to the Church than the analogy of the body. The parabolic utterance of our Lord concerning the vine and the branches should probably be applied to the individual in his relation with Christ ; but even in a vine there is actual and visible unity. The branches do not take themselves off to live in isolation. The vine and its branches constitute one organism. A body, however, is the organ of personality, and gives therefore the better analogy for the Church. Its differentiation of function is more specialized and its unity is a higher complex. The vine may put forth a greater or less number of branches ; but a body putting forth a greater or less number of limbs is a monstrosity. And there is a certain monstrosousness, a certain unnatural

freakishness, in the sectarianism which has deformed the Church. There is no organic bond between the "branches" of Christ's Church at present. Each has learned to live as though it were the whole Church and the only Church; and if that evil assumption is being slowly discarded its baneful effects will yet cost pain and labour to remove. At present the innumerable limbs of the body obey no co-ordinating authority. The Body of Christ is suffering from locomotor ataxia.

It is well known that the divisions of the Church are a great scandal to the world, a great hindrance to Christ's Kingdom, and a danger to society. It is a weird and wicked phenomenon that is presented to the eyes of men on Good Friday morning, when Anglicans and Romans and Free Churchmen all seek communion with Christ in His Sacrifice, yet may not have communion with one another. A Free Churchman may read outside an Anglican Church a poster with the announcement: *Your Lord was crucified for you on Good Friday. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?* And he knows that although he stands with the crucified Lord and not with the scornful multitudes who pass by, he can have no fellowship in the central sacrament of the Faith with the Christian people who worship in that place. It is not that one should desire to see a rigid and mechanical uniformity in the Church; but one should surely feel the need of co-ordination of effort and the combination of qualities and traditions and graces without which the present divisions of the Church can never hope to conquer the world. The reunion of Christendom is not a matter of mere amiable sentiment. It is of vital importance for the life of the Church and for the welfare of mankind. With the break-up of the Church in the sixteenth century there occurred that profound fissure in European civilization which we discussed in an earlier part of this book; and if there is to be once more any real coherence and solidarity in the institutions of men, the separated elements of Catholicism and Freedom must be harmonized. Otherwise the religion which is the historic root of all that is creative and life-giving in Europe will continue to be misunderstood, the true spiritual

basis of life will never get itself recommended amongst men, and all history may be swamped in a rising flood of anarchy and confusion.

But union will be attainable only when each of the present Churches is willing to consider itself and others as members of the Body of Christ. We shall find no peace or satisfaction by making submission to any existing Church because she claims to be the whole Body. As Dr. Orchard has said, "Rome is not so regarded by us that we should think it a spiritual calamity to cross to its community. . . . But we should regard crossing to Rome as an ecclesiastical blunder, a disservice to Catholicism."<sup>1</sup> The surest way of accomplishing reunion is for the sects to complete their partial witness with those elements which they lack: not indeed to destroy their witness, but to give it proportion and profounder meaning by showing that it has relations with something greater than itself. They will thus send forth challenges of love to each other and create the psychological atmosphere in which corporate, visible unity will be achieved without heart-burning, jealousy, or regrets.

Finally, a body is an instrument for action. Its hands are tools wherewith to change the face of the earth. Its distinctness must not be confused with insulation and aloofness. All a man's thoughts and actions are founded upon his awareness of bodily distinctness, but he cannot either know things or alter things in aloofness. The Body of Christ must be distinct, individual, of definite character, but she has to touch and to transfigure the world. She must be within reach of the sorrows and doubts of the world, for her Lord would have men "handle and see." It is an appalling reflection that with the Body of Christ left in the world to be His implement of action, civilization should still be corroded by greed and broken by militarism: that ugliness and squalor should still be amongst its characteristic signs after two thousand years of Christianity. But a Church which passionately believes herself to be the very Body of Christ will be feared by all oppressors and sycophants and beloved of the poor and needy. Tender

<sup>1</sup> W. E. Orchard, D.D., *The New Catholicism*, pp. 151, 152.

and winsome in her priestly office, she will exhibit an austere majesty in her prophetic word, and she will speak with the tones of Christ to all the pharisaic respectability which covers the abysmal injustices and the beast-like rivalries of the modern world. Side by side with her worship, springing from the grace and strength there received, will be the social application of her sacraments and the setting forth of the Christian order of life. She will bestow upon her sons power to destroy and power to build. She will be the Church militant for which humanity in bondage waits. She will assail the devil in his strongholds and she will cover the face of the earth with beauty and truth.

If the Church of Christ perishes from amongst men it is difficult to see how the future of the world can be other than gloomy and filled with the noise of forebodings. We know the tragic and awful possibilities of human life and the hellish confusion into which it can fall. There is no promise of security apart from Christ. There seems to be no alternative ideal remaining. Positivism, the last rival of Christianity, is apparently bankrupt and dishonoured. But Christianity is helpless, it fails at the outset, unless it produces a Church, a redeemed society, a human fellowship, based upon the new spiritual experience. We believe that the historic Church, in spite of sin and strife within her borders, does bear witness, if dimly and gropingly, to Christ as the Saviour of men and society, and that the historic Church is His Body remaining in the world to be the channel of His power and purpose. And therefore we cannot believe that she has done her work and exhausted her meaning. We hope and pray rather that for the world's sake her wounds may be healed and her weak hands strengthened, and that men may see that we who love her have "come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant."

## VII

### THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it : and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day : for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie : but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.—*The Revelation of St. John the Divine.*

THE choice by which we are confronted does not lie between the alternatives of a churchly or a churchless religion, or between a churchless religion and secularism, but between the Church and no definite and constructive religion at all. Upon this point the instinct of Rome has been sound and true, no matter how inadequately she may have expressed it. This is the very marrow of Catholicism, and the Catholic presentation of the Gospel has therefore strong claims upon this age when socialism is in the air and social idealism is recommended as a substitute for religious belief. Individualism is dying, and individualistic conceptions of religion must die with it : they must die for the sake of the individual, who cannot find himself apart from fellowship ; and for the sake of religion, which is essentially an attractive, combining, socializing force, even though it may commence by isolating men in a great loneliness. And fellowship is of the vital nature, it lies at the very core, of the idea of the Church. If the Church of Christ fails and falls, it will mean that Christ cannot solve the fundamental problem of society : that He cannot secure a position of such centrality and control in human nature as to bind its

refractory elements into one body. If He cannot maintain a Church, He certainly cannot establish a Kingdom.

The abolition of the Church would release no new saving forces in society. Churchmen are already in society, moving upon the common streets and performing the common tasks, influencing politics and culture and commerce; and if there were no Church they could exert no greater influence. But if there were no Church, the essential social meaning of Christianity would vanish. If the Christian Faith does not draw men together when they pray, it will hardly succeed in bringing them together when they vote. If they cannot articulate their fellowship in their worship, they will not therefore be more ready to express it in their work. If they no longer take the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ in equality, they will not therefore be more desirous of taking their daily bread in equality. If men forget the Christ of the Church, they will not find Him more easily in the market-place.

But the Church is under suspicion of confining Christ to her special forms, of holding His grace as in a reservoir instead of carrying it as in a channel, and of limiting His value to the sentimental exercise of devotions instead of applying it to the sorrows and the wounds of the world. She is roundly accused of having nothing to say to the practical enigmas of life and of doing nothing to relieve the pressure of the enormous burdens which lie upon the shoulders of the struggling multitudes. It should therefore be the function of those free and independent societies of Christians which have a close and sympathetic acquaintance with democratic ideals to aid in the interpretation of the Catholic Faith to the modern mind and to show that it is the only adequate basis of social reconstruction and provides the sublimest motive of social service. This restless and confused modern world must somehow be convinced that the Church is neither a pathetic survival from credulous ages nor a retreat for neurotics, but that she is the witness and attestation of the unseen foundations of the soul and of society: that she possesses

the secret of joy and the cure of sin, and that she actually holds the keys of the door of God's Kingdom.

When communities and cultures decay and collapse, the explanation is to be sought in either, and sometimes in both, of the following causes. They have failed to provide a sufficient motive for life; or they have failed to provide a sufficient motive for fellowship. Pessimism, the doubt of the inherent worth of human existence, and sin, the breach of communion and fellowship, are the twin sources of social catastrophe. Now, Christendom unquestionably presents a remarkable phenomenon in history, in that while it does not depend upon racial ties, but includes diverse elements of blood and temperament, it has endured through a series of portentous social changes, has withstood the shocks of military violence and the constant corrosive activities of scepticism. Even its own disruption has not entirely destroyed its influence and for two thousand years it has maintained a unique tradition. It may safely be asserted that no other culture, no imperial sway or religious ethos, precisely rivals Christianity in its demonstrated power to maintain the individual in a progressively liberalizing environment; and if the Christian dogma is largely disregarded by the modern world, we may at least affirm that the world seems no happier for it. The history of Christendom looks like a miracle. It can be explained only by the fact that Christianity does make the one final answer to pessimism and the one final answer to sin. It reveals the supernatural basis of values in the Incarnation, and it reveals the supernatural basis of fellowship in the Atonement—the at-one-ment.

If God Himself has walked these earthly roads, and if our human tools have been used by hands divine, the day's work must be worth something. If a wedding was once attended by the Son of God, marriage was made in heaven, even if some marriages are not. If little children were once kissed and blessed by One who knew the Father, we can see why they do well to romp and laugh while their elders can only worry and fret. If God was born at Bethlehem, it must be a good thing to

be born even at Bermondsey. There cannot be a more fundamental basis for eternal optimism than the prologue to the Fourth Gospel; and the Church, as the visible token of Christ's continued presence, has to fling this supernatural joy into the face of the world. She has to bring back songs and light to the dark alleys and grimy cities of our industrial civilization, until in a riot of sheer happiness men destroy these symbols of doubt and fear. As the Body of Christ she has to be the reminder of the nobility of the common earth. She has to restore men's confidence in "the ultimate decency of things," showing that life and labour are so holy that the poverty and squalor of the world will appear blasphemous. Has God come to this planet earth?

And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
In England's pleasant pastures seen?

Then some things ought to be banished at once. Whatever causes men to think meanly of themselves or of their fellows is the contradiction of Christ. Whatever causes men to doubt their own dignity is of the devil. It is not a little surprising to discover how calmly it is assumed that the sense of human value can be preserved apart from faith in its supernatural foundation, and that it is possible to believe in the divinity of man without believing in the humanity of God. It is supposed that we can prove that a man is worth a living wage when we cannot explain why we think he is worth his own birthday. It is supposed that we can honour him as a citizen when we cannot clearly say whether we think that a city is more honourable than an ant-hill.

The dogma that Christ was God, or rather that God was Christ, is the most substantial guarantee that man is Man and that his history is an epic and not an error; and the Church which began with the Incarnation ought therefore to be filled with the joy of life. The colour and sound of its beauty ought to shine and ring in her

worship. It is a pathetic sight to see in any dreary manufacturing town the nightly queues of wan-faced workers waiting admission to the cheap houses of entertainment, but it is a sight which testifies that not even the drab and soulless monotony of our industrialism can quite obliterate in the sons of God the desire to shout for joy, though it is true that their search for happiness is insufficiently rewarded by the poor provision which they find. Men need to be reassured that life is great and wonderful. The Church possesses the reassuring word, and she must learn to shout it with confidence, build it in stone, write it in gorgeous colours, convey it by sign and symbol, so that all who run may read. Catholicism did encourage men to dance and sing upon the village greens of England; but the important duty of the Church to-day is to declare herself the unflinching foe of all those forces and interests which blighted the merriment of the common people. She must proclaim herself, with her sacraments and dogma, the true vehicle of the joy of life which is enduring only when it is the fruit of the Spirit. For if she passes out of existence there will arise in the earth only "that litany of paganism which always ends with a wail," and hope and assurance will die in the hearts of men.

In the second place, the Church has the cure of sin, the answer to the breach of fellowship, the revelation of the supernatural basis of brotherhood. In late years great hopes and expectations have been built upon the fact that the ancient diversities of mankind were being abolished and that men were everywhere finding identity of interests and pursuits. East and West had met at last. Railways, liners, and telegraphs had linked the darkest corners of the earth with the established centres of civilization, and along these channels men and merchandise and ideas passed to and fro, all alike losing the marks of local origin and becoming cosmopolitan. The weavers of Lancashire sold their wares in China, and Preston was bound up with Peking. A riot in Bombay might cause immediate trouble in Birmingham. Men all

the world over were becoming uniform in their methods of clothing and feeding their bodies and building their cities. Palatial hotels and the sweating system could be found in any country, Old England or New England. A Turk in a tall hat, drinking liqueur-brandy, was regarded as a sign of the practical federation of the world. It was too often entirely overlooked that physical proximity, and external similarity, and identity of material interests, are no real proofs of inward, spiritual fellowship. Two black cats tied by their tails and hanging across a clothes-line have all these things without being therefore united in affectionate understanding. The fact that barriers of race and religion had been overcome by high finance meant no more than that men had become more interested in trade than in tradition, and more concerned about gold than about God. It did not prove that they were learning to love mankind more than their fathers did. The age of cosmopolitanism did not produce the parliament of man, but the world war. It did not bind men into a more comprehensive fellowship, but involved them in the most comprehensive slaughter which has ever defiled the human record. Methodists went out to shoot Moravians. The Catholics of Belgium had to withstand the fury of the Catholics of Bavaria. Luther and Mohammed became brothers in arms for the defence of some mysterious common cause which Protestants from the English counties and Pathans from the Indian hills were assailing for some mysterious common reason. The world-market in which many philanthropic agnostics had hoped to lay the foundations of the Parliament of Man became the scene of the bloodiest scuffle in history.

The war has nevertheless quickened in some ways the sense of human solidarity ; but it ought to have convinced us that solidarity can never be given an adequate enunciation upon a material basis. The desire for visible, social recognition of man's organic unity had been growing strong in all countries, but its growth was too often accompanied by the belief that an enlightened secularism would eventually succeed in establishing the human

fellowship. Intellectuals and the masses accepted the doctrine that if men could be convinced of the fundamental community of their secular interests, their common sense would quickly sweep away the obsolete loyalties and narrow illusions which divide them. A simple way of escape from many enormous difficulties! But it takes no account of the truth that upon the secular plane, if you rigorously confine men to that plane, you must deal with selfishness as a prime factor. Utilitarianism and hedonism, under any names, contain the seeds of the death of society, even of a world-society. A society consciously based only upon secular interests is doomed at the outset. Men must always consecrate their social union at some altar and represent it with mystical symbols, for they are always at least dimly aware that all society is a miracle. They are always faintly conscious of the awful disruptive and demonic power in men which no reasoning can exorcise, which can refuse to accept society as necessary to self. They somehow feel that superman is potential in every cradle and that only God can cast out devils.

The authoritative social sanction must be religious, uniting men in the unseen before it unites them on the earth. It must deal with men's souls before it deals with their stomachs. Eucken has put this very definitely.

Surely . . . it becomes imperatively necessary to find simple guiding lines which will restore our feeling of solidarity and enable us to treat life's problem as one that is common to us all. But the simplicity we speak of is not to be found in the world as given. We can only win to it in inwardly transcending the given and taking up the standpoint of an independent spirituality. For only thus can what is simple be at the same time great; only thus can it be the convincing expression of a new depth in the universe and give us a spiritual assurance in regard to it. It is with simple truth of this kind that early Christianity moved and rejuvenated the world, and only through such a simple truth can we, in turn, win spiritual anchorage and triumph over the irrational and the chaotic.<sup>1</sup>

Secularism has failed to create the moral conviction of solidarity. The prevalence of practical Positivism through-

<sup>1</sup> Eucken, *Meaning and Value of Life*, p. 146.

out the modern world has but caused thoughtful men to see the terrible need of such a conviction ; and apart from the Christian Faith there seems to be no power capable of producing it. Christianity provides the most indefeasible social sanction, the securest basis of fellowship, in the triple social aspect of its revelation.

It reveals the violation of fellowship as having terrible effects far beyond the visible structure of human society, effects which penetrate to the very roots of the Universe. It shows God crucified by the sin of man, the body of Christ shattered by those forces which make for the destruction of society. There cannot possibly be a more absolute condemnation of the self-regarding, unsocial motive than to declare that its final issue would be in the murder of God ; but this is precisely the meaning which the Catholic Faith finds in Calvary. It is sometimes said that such teaching about sin is too harsh and inhuman : that a more genial doctrine would help men to struggle with better success against their temptations. But is it not certain that by so much as sin is excused, by just so much is the force of temptation increased ? The Christian Faith provides the strongest buttress which a man's better nature can find when it assures him that he is fighting the devil : not merely an anti-social tendency, but a force which crucifies the Holiest ; not a natural instinct of partial value, but the antithesis and enemy of all values. But this is the revelation of the participation of God in the human fellowship. It says that God is so identified with our affairs that our disloyalty brings Him to the cross. It lifts our human brotherhood to a starry throne and shows that the roots of our family-tree are not in the slime but in the sublime. We are not brothers because we have similar bodies and appetites : we have similar bodies and appetites because we are brothers, and we are brothers because we are first of all sons. The problem given to us in this world is to set forth this secret and unseen connection in terms of economics and politics : to write it in laws and build it in noble cities. How can the spiritual solidarity of the race

be more cogently expressed than in the Catholic belief that human sin crucified God and that all mankind has some responsibility for the historical events of Gethsemane and Calvary? The broken body of Christ is the sign that the broken fellowship involves God and man in crucifixion; and the faith that God is at Calvary with healing power explains why every cup of cold water given in Christ's name is endowed with miraculous healing virtue.

Finally, this faith in the Atonement of Christ provides the most effective dynamic for the life of service and goodwill. Gratitude is a nobler motive than pride. Self-esteem may keep men respectable and a sense of self-sufficiency may make them successful; but only gratitude can make them cross-bearers. Gratitude and loyalty are closely connected. What is loyalty but the sense of owing service to a person or cause outside oneself? What is patriotism but gratitude to the soil and the soul of one's fatherland? The Pharisee in the temple probably said things about himself which were literally true, but he was small and mean because he had no consciousness of being head over heels in debt. If the face of this earth is to be transformed, it will be done only by men who know that they owe even the honour of being crucified to the grace of God. But it is impossible to adduce a greater reason for gratitude than that of the redemption wrought for men by God in Christ. It is impossible to find a finer reason for loyalty to the fellowship than can be discovered in the loyalty of God displayed in Christ: the divine loyalty which is purely of grace and not of gratitude. It is impossible to tell men anything more terrific than that God has died for them. It is impossible to throw upon them a greater obligation. Here, then, is the threefold revelation of social sanction provided by the Christian Faith: an absolute condemnation of the violation of fellowship; the assurance that the foundation and the true life of all fellowship is God Himself; the provision of the noblest motive for life consecrated to service.

Now, the Church is the human fellowship healed and completed in Christ. She has to proclaim to a stricken world that the common root of human life is not to be found amongst things visible, but beyond the veil. She has to show that her sacraments set forth the unseen foundation of society: that they involve men in heroic self-giving; and that her communion is the basis upon which Utopias may be solidly and successfully built. She is in the world as the type and sacrament of the Kingdom of God. She is the divine democracy realized. She is the brotherhood of man made manifest. Confronted with mankind, now involved in one common misery, tormented by one common wound, she must surely believe that one common healing is necessary and that in her hands are the balm and anodyne. But for such a service her own broken fellowship must first be repaired and her isolated and paralysed powers and virtues incorporated afresh into one living complex.

The vast schisms of humanity must be opposed by the Holy Catholic Church throughout all the world, a conscious unity, a definite influence for coalition amidst the rivalries and antagonisms of men. To a world scarred by the wounds of awful wars and vexed by the feuds of classes and sections she must offer the holy sign of humanity made one in the fellowship of the mystery. The souls of men must be delivered from the politicians and financiers, and also from all the tyranny of small and partial loyalties. The Church must reveal the new society in which there are neither Greeks nor Barbarians, Britons nor Germans, bond nor free, bourgeoisie nor proletariat. Her living spirit must provide the atmosphere in which the ancient animosities will die; for what is she but the race integrated into the life of God? What is she but the world set free? Who is her Master but the Prince of Peace?

This is visionary. It belongs to the kingdom of dreams. But it is high time that the young men should see visions and the old men should dream dreams; for it is certain that unless there is an outpouring of the Spirit of God

ON THE SHORE

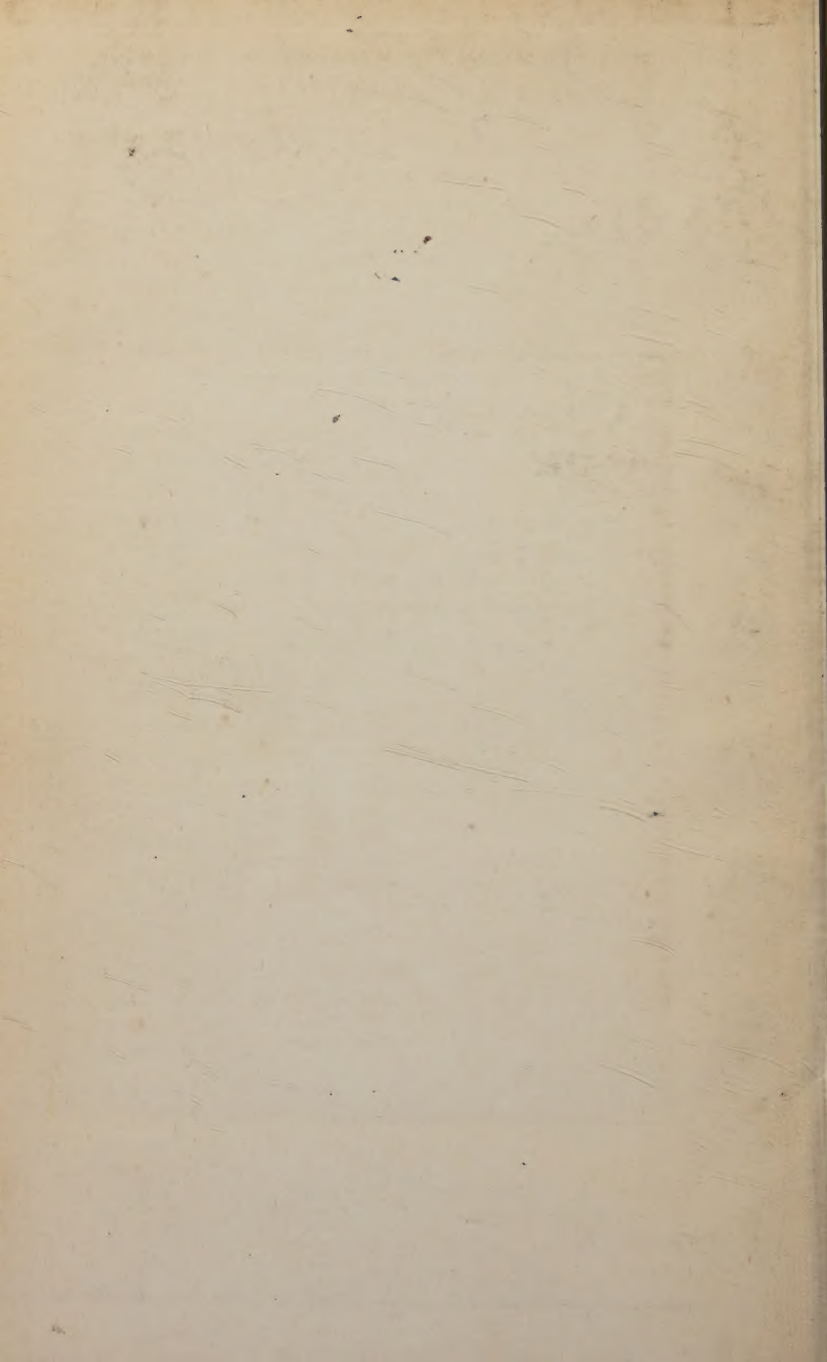
THE CITY

upon all nations the future will be dark and terrible. And if the Church passes away, her going will leave mankind in grave distress. It is not a little thing that the Church of Christ should dwindle and die and become a by-word amongst the nations. It is not a little thing that living she should be to men a stone of stumbling instead of the rock of their salvation. It is not a little thing, but the supreme calamity of all our tragic history, that she who was sent to preach Christ broken for love's sake should show herself broken and marred by worldliness and pride: that she who was to reveal society redeemed should herself fall into fragments and sections. But her Lord is not dead, and He hears the prayers of the faithful. And because He loves our human race He will bid His Church put on her beautiful garments, and men will flow unto her. She will speak to them and woo them by every argument and by every art. She will take the beauty and the sorrow and the toil of the world to her own bosom and consecrate them. She will dispense to men the broken Body and the shed Blood of Christ for medicine and food. She will be the priestess of all nations, the helper of the poor, the defender of the oppressed, the friend of sinners, and the mother of saints. She will stand by men when they suffer and fortify them when they die. And beholding her they will cry, "My Lord and my God!"

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